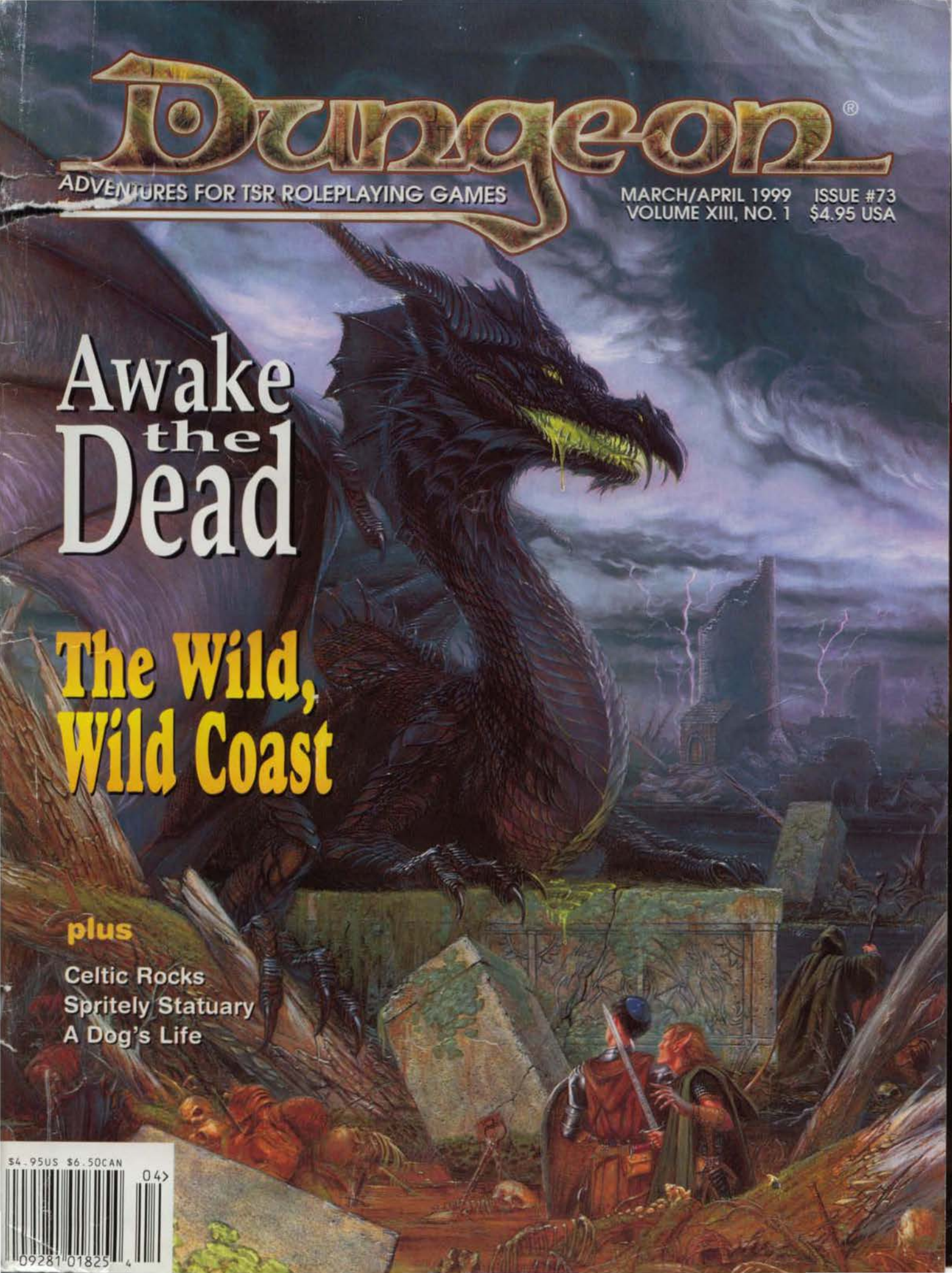
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MARCH/APRIL 1999
ISSUE #73

Cover
Stephen Daniele beautifully captures the scheming black wyrm Voaraghamanthar in this issue's striking cover for "Eye of Myrkul."

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"You see," Max explained, "there's different kinds of dead: there's sort of dead, mostly dead, and all dead. This fella here, he's only sort of dead."

— William Goldman, *The Princess Bride*

Editorial

The Bold Experiment

With this issue, we present the final installment in the Mere of Dead Men series. Eric Boyd's "Eye of Myrkul" completes this chapter in the history of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting and introduces us to a pair of black dragons more fully detailed in Ed Greenwood's "Wyrms of the North" article in *DRAGON® Magazine* #258 (the April issue). It also pits brave heroes against the insidious Cult of the Dragon and the lingering vestiges of the dead god Myrkul.

What began as a trepidatious experiment turned into something extraordinary and unprecedented, thanks largely to the writers and artists who contributed to the series. The overwhelmingly positive response we've received to our "experiment" has prompted us to consider publishing another series of adventures in the not-too-distant future, and we're currently contemplating several different ideas. We haven't settled on anything yet, so feel free to persuade us. We'd love to hear what kinds of series you'd like to see. We also want to hear from anyone who thought the Mere of Dead Men series was a bad idea. Your opinions count, too. (After all, most of our longtime subscribers are quite capable of stringing together five completely unrelated adventures and forming a coherent AD&D® campaign. This has always been one of the magazine's hallmarks.)

In *DRAGON Magazine* #251, we ran a contest inviting readers to "design the Sleeping Dragon Inn." The winning entry has been chosen and will appear in an upcoming issue of *DRAGON Magazine*. One of our forerunning ideas is to publish a short series of generic, low-level adventures based around the Sleeping Dragon Inn. Recent surveys suggest that our readers crave more low-level adventures, and the Sleeping Dragon Inn seems the ideal starting point for fledgling PCs. It's also something around which DMs and contributors can continue to build adventures. While I generally shun adventures that begin with the PCs guzzling tankards of ale at an inn, waiting for that "mysterious, urgent-looking figure" to walk through the door, this series (if executed properly) could be a fantastic exception to the rule.

One of the drawbacks to running a series is that loyal readers must wait several months to acquire all of the adventures. The Mere of Dead Men series was unveiled one piece at a time over a period of ten months. For some DMs, that's a long time to wait! If we decide to run another series, would it be better to compile the adventures into a single issue and release them all at once? The advantage is that DMs would have enough material to run a campaign immediately. The disadvantage is that readers might not receive as much variety (low-level modules, high-level modules, generic modules, world-specific modules, etc.) in that particular issue. This would, of course, depend entirely on the nature of the series.

If you have any suggestions, we need to hear from you. The content of *DUNGEON Adventures* depends largely on the contributions of its readers. This is your chance to shape future issues by telling us what you most want to see.

Chris Perkins

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Heroes encounter an ancient resident of Windholm Peninsula.

QUOITINE QUEST

BY GREG RICK, CAL REA, and KATE CHADBOURNE

Celtic cliffhanger

Artwork by Toren Atkinson
Cartography by Diesel

The authors dreamed up "Quoitine Quest" during their adventures in southern Wales. Greg earned his Masters in English while there and now works for Lotus as a Notes Developer. Kate studies Irish and Welsh and is currently writing her Ph. D. dissertation at Harvard about the Celtic Otherworld. Cal works as an archaeologist for the state of Missouri and travels around inspecting ancient burials and shipwrecks.

This AD&D® adventure is for 4–6 characters of levels 1–3 (about 10 total levels). However, the DM can easily adjust the strength of the monsters for characters of levels 4–6. In either case, the climactic encounter features a high-level monster that the PCs are not expected to fight; should the adventurers kill it, this would lessen the enjoyment of the final dilemma. No specific character classes are required, but a Ranger might be helpful. The party should be mostly of Good alignment, but the adventure works equally well with Neutral characters.

For those DMs using the Celtic sourcebook (HR3 *Celts*) to run a historical campaign or for those who would like to try a one-shot Celtic adventure, this module can be easily tailored to fit the Celtic world. (See the "Celtic Adventure Notes" sidebar for details). There are a number of alternate ideas in the "Celtic Adventure Notes" section that DMs of non-Celtic campaigns might enjoy using as well.

Adventure Background

A little over a century ago, a group of adventurers accepted a commission from a small village at the end of an unremarkable peninsula known as Windholm. The commission was a plea for help in overcoming a monster that had been stalking and killing people, and the payment was the thanks of the village folk. Of the party that fought the creature, only one—a fighter named Sweyne—survived the encounter. He wounded it seriously, and though wounded himself managed to flee clutching a handful of milky pink pebbles that glowed slightly in the dark.

After recovering from his wounds, Sweyne traveled to the nearest city

and attempted to sell his acquisition. It was not long before a mage discovered the stones were of a substance known as quoitine, a scarce mineral charged with the energies of the Elemental Plane of Earth. Quoitine is a vital component in the construction of magical items dealing with earth magic; it can be used to fashion *stones of controlling earth elementals*, *wands of earth and stone*, or *rings of earth elemental command*. The last known source of quoitine had been depleted centuries ago, and so quoitine had to be fetched by way of extraplanar travel—a daunting proposition for all but the most powerful mages. Sweyne became very rich because he was careful to keep the source of his wealth secret.

To maintain his new lifestyle, Sweyne was forced to return and acquire more quoitine. He was careful to elude pursuers sent by unscrupulous mages. The villagers, of course, welcomed his occasional visits. The beast had not sallied forth since that first battle with Sweyne's party, but it still killed anyone who entered its territory. The villagers assumed Sweyne's honor kept him coming back to fight it and that his battles with it served to keep the creature in check. Several times he successfully obtained more quoitine, but one time the beast proved luckier than Sweyne; the fighter never returned to the village or to the cities full of expectant mages.

Over time, the mystery of Sweyne's source seemed more and more unanswerable, so many dismissed or forgot it. An apprentice named Gaerist, whose mentor had purchased quoitine from Sweyne, doggedly pursued the mystery when he came into power. He narrowed the possible areas down to three and then hired a band of adventurers to search the three disparate locations.

The party searched for about half a year before they traveled to the small peninsula known as Windholm. They first tried the local gentry to learn whether they knew anything about a heroic fighter named Sweyne. They received a cold reception from the first noble they met, a woman named Lady Penrhys who lived in the only habitable portion of a ruined castle left to her by more dynamic ancestors. The second noble, Lord Gwebli, knew of Sweyne and directed the party to the small village by the sea where Sweyne occasionally visited. The party followed the local trails to the village and spoke with the people there. They learned the folk story of Sweyne's heroic first triumph and his tragic last battle with the creature, and the subsequent naming of the cliff top as Sweyne's Howes.

Despite warnings against traveling to the cliff top and the villagers' fears that the party would awaken the slumbering beast, the mage's hired band trudged up the nearby hills and across the cliff top to the monster's reputed location. They came across the monster and managed to bargain with it, allowing all three to escape alive. Furthermore, each left carrying a small piece of quoitine. The party returned to the mage's home and gave the quoitine to him. Although he was overjoyed at the discovery, he was dismayed to learn that the party not only refused

Celtic Adventure Notes

All page references in this section refer to the *Celts* campaign sourcebook (HR3).

The adventure is set in Wales and should be placed on any small peninsula in the southern portion of Wales. If the PCs are from another part of the Celtic world, then Gaerist can serve as the motive for their traveling to Wales. The DM should devise a new motive for Gaerist, the simplest being that he is a druid in search of rare magical stones found only in southern Wales. If the PCs are from Wales, perhaps one of the PC Warriors owes allegiance to Lord Gwebli. The party could begin by killing the worgs. Later, a wandering druid (Gaerist) could hire them to find the quoitine he believes is located in this region of Wales.

In a Celtic campaign, Lady Penrhys may be treated as a corpse in the process of becoming a banshee, or else a banshee that died before her time. In the latter case, she bemoans her fall from grandeur, obviously building up to a banshee's wail. This gives the PCs a chance to sprint away and avoid Lady Penrhys' attack. Otherwise, the PCs are subject to a normal wail; Druids may attempt to turn Lady Penrhys if of sufficient level. Remember to convert the gold pieces in Lady Penrhys' painted box—and elsewhere in the adventure—to an appropriate type of currency. Gaerist and Lord Gwebli barter with the PCs instead of paying them in coin.

Lord Gwebli is depending on Honor Debt (page 56) to insure that the PCs undertake the slaughtering of the worgs. Any PC who refuses the task after eating at Lord Gwebli's table and accepting a gift is required to leave his territory. (Attempts to return the gift after hearing the demand are considered base and churlish.) Lord Gwebli notifies both Cillau and the village by the sea to deny the PCs hospitality if they refuse to aid him. If the PCs do not vacate the Windholm by noon the following day, he forces the issue with the help of his remaining warriors. PCs who refuse to help lose Enech (–2 penalty).

For the Screaming Stone section, the DM should allow only PCs with the Warrior's Scream NWP (page 29) to awaken the sleeping galeb duhr. If no one in the party has this proficiency, then only Warriors should be allowed to make the Constitution check at a –6 or –8 penalty, at the DM's discretion.

The final dilemma involves a xorn, which is foreign to a Celtic world unless the monster is redefined. The closest parallel would be to make the beast some sort of shapechanged Fomorian pet exiled from Ireland. When the party learns this from the creature, they could obtain a potion from Gaerist that would transform the monster back to its natural form (DM's choice of form). Helping it return to Ireland could prove an adventure in itself. Alternatively, Sweyne's Howes could be a lake sheltered in a small valley accessible only by the cliff trail, with the quoitine Gaerist desires lying on the bottom of the lake. The PCs would have to dive down and pry it free, all the while dealing with an incensed afanc (page 42). Conversely, the quoitine could be hidden nearer to the lakeshore and closely guarded by its strange protector.

to tell him the location of the quoitine, but also refused to retrieve any more for him due to their promise to the monster; see "Final Dilemma" for a detailed description of the monster and its particular impasse.

Gaerist resigned himself to working with the quoitine he had and put off the problem of obtaining more until he needed it. Despite not being told the exact location, Gaerist inferred from the length of time the party searched and their previous reports to him that it was on Windholm Peninsula that the party had finally found the quoitine source.

Ten years have passed since then, and Gaerist has used all the quoitine in experiments and magical items. He is now a high-level Mage who has focused on earth magic. (He is not a true Earth Elementalist.) His recent researches have led him to believe that there is a purer source of quoitine available, more suitable to the manufacture of powerful magical items dealing with earth magic. The Mage wishes to have a party investigate this possibility, as well as renew his collection of quoitine. So once again, Gaerist is looking to hire a band of adventurers to brave the wilderness known as the Windholm Peninsula and retrieve quoitine from the beast's lair.

Starting the Adventure

Gaerist hires the party by whatever means are most appropriate to the DM's world. Perhaps Gaerist was the mentor of a PC Mage, or the PCs were simply the first group to hear his offer to retrieve the quoitine. Gaerist offers substantial monetary recompense for the stones: 500 gp for all inferior stones; 1,000 gp for all superior stones; and 2,000 gp for the entire hoard of quoitine. He insists that the PCs agree to sell him everything they find for one flat fee and draws up a document accordingly. He prefers high quality quoitine and makes this evident to the PCs. Use the following as appropriate:

> You walk outside the city gates and down the trade road to the south. According to the directions you received, there should be a narrow footpath on the right-hand side. You search briefly and indeed find a trailhead marked by a small pile of variously colored stones.
>
> The trail is bumpy and covered with branches from the various overhanging trees. However, the walk is pleasant enough, allowing time for reflection. Gaerist is supposedly a mage of some renown, but it is hard to guess whether his name is really known beyond the nearby cities. As for those people who claim to know him, he is a reliable mage capable of casting a number of lesser magics. Others hinted at more significant powers, but then, what kind of famous mage would he be without such rumors?
>
> The trees fall away to each side and before you stands what might graciously be called a hut, though hovel would be nearer the mark. The building is an odd jumble of felled trees joined at various angles, all topped by a thatch roof of ill-woven grass. Beside the entrance to this abode, a middle-aged man splits logs. The trail does not appear to continue past the crude cabin.

Gaerist, male human W13: AL LN; AC 6 (*armor* spell); MV 12; hp 24; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (staff) or 1–4 (dagger); SD *armor* and *stoneskin* spells; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 10; ML 13; potion of *polymorph self*, oaken staff, dagger. Spells (5/5/5/4/4/2).

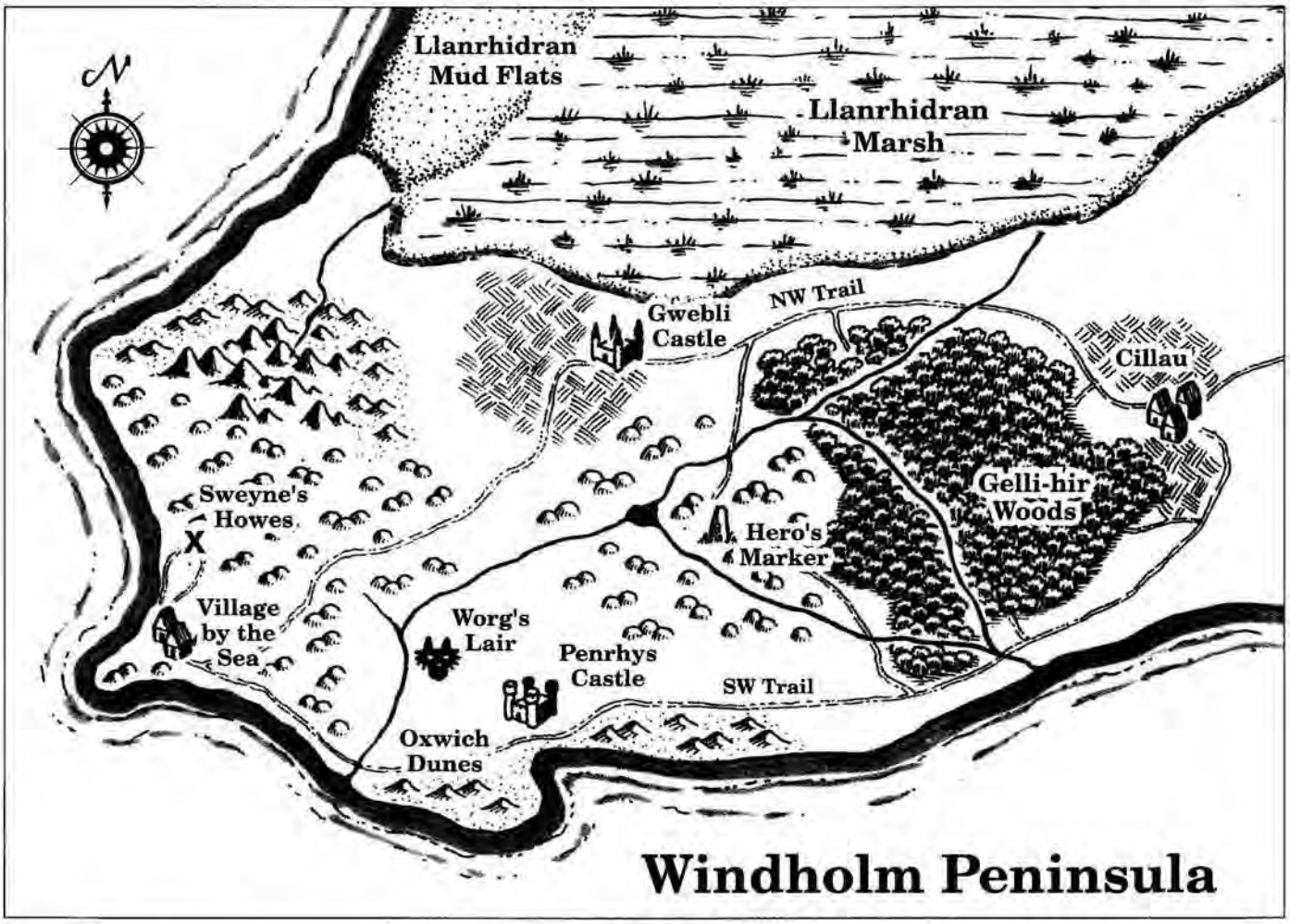
Gaerist may choose from the following spells, noting that those marked (r) are reversible: 1st—*armor, detect magic, erase, fist of stone, jump, metamorphose liquids, phantasmal force, spook*; 2nd—*alter self, deeppockets, detect invisibility, fog cloud, forget, levitate, locate object* (r), *sense shifting*; 3rd—*explosive runes, Maximillian's stony grasp, minor malison, nondetection, protection from evil 10' radius, secret page, spectral force*; 4th—*dig, fire trap, minor globe of invulnerability, phantasmal killer, shout, stoneskin*; 5th—*advanced illusion, cone of cold, conjure elemental, distance distortion, stone shape, transmute rock to mud* (r); 6th—*claws of the umber hulk, enchant an item, invisible stalker, stone to flesh* (r).

Gaerist greets the PCs warily from a distance and answers their questions, all the while trying to discern whether they are trustworthy. Should they appear hostile, he plays it safe by entering the hut and slamming the door, which is, of course, *wizard locked*. If necessary, he drinks a potion of *polymorph self*, flees to the city in raven form, and alerts the city guards to the band of brigands who attacked him at his "summer" home. Once backed up by guards, Gaerist does not hesitate to use his spells.

In the more likely event that the PCs are well behaved and Gaerist decides to hire them, use the following as you wish. Gaerist is wordy and given to digressions.

> "Simply stated, I need you to obtain a rare mineral known as quoitine. It has a rosy hue and should be easily identifiable. As far as I can ascertain, quoitine can be found only on the Windholm Peninsula. A brave warrior named Sweyne was the first to bring quoitine's availability to the attention of the mages in the region. He lived 100 odd years ago and used to sell quoitine stones to my mentor, but that is another story.
>
> "The stones can be used to create items of magic dealing with the earth. Quoitine occurs naturally on the Elemental Plane of Earth and, well, I need you to find some stones and bring them to me. I believe there are two types, which I shall simply term inferior and superior. The latter most piques my interest.
>
> "For your trouble, I am prepared to reward you handsomely. I must insist, however, that you agree only to sell the stones you find to me.
>
> "A group I hired some ten years ago found enough quoitine to serve my needs at the time. However, they promised the guardian beast not to reveal the location or to return and, to my knowledge, have never done so. Clearly, I would prefer if you could arrange something better than this."

Gaerist does not offer the PCs anything up front unless they are desperate and willing to leave something valuable in return. He has almost no money and very little of value with him; his possessions are safely stowed in the city. If asked, he mentions the names of the adventurers he hired nearly a decade ago:



Caddryn, Celwand, and Gareg. The reasons he doesn't go himself are numerous: he hates traveling ("the bugs, the rain"), he gets behind on his reading, his experiments suffer, the town would probably be attacked if he left, and last of all, "one becomes powerful so that one can have others do the, um, dirty work."

After Gaerist has hired the PCs, read the following as they head for the Windholm Peninsula:

> The last few days of your journey have reminded you why the Windholm Peninsula has never been a particularly well-liked spot, especially during late autumn. The rain is interminable, and if questioned about the color of the sun, you would have to respond from memories that are weeks old. Ahead of you, however, lies the small town known to travelers as Three Crosses. Beside the road, in the last of the evening light, you can see the inn that gives the place its name. The town is called Cillau by the locals, but at the moment, all the town means to you is the opportunity for rest. Perchance after a hearty mutton stew and a good night's sleep, you will be ready to search for leads to the fabled quoitine.

Cillau sits at the eastern entrance to the Windholm Peninsula. There are two primary roads out of the town, one to the southwest and one to the northwest. The innkeeper gladly provides room and board for an appropriately modest fee (1 sp each). After a simple breakfast of bread and ale, the PCs can start exploring this small town.

The PCs are free to wander Cillau and question individual townsfolk. Of course, if the PCs are awake early enough, they can ask the farmers who meet at the inn before heading out to the communal fields. Below is a list of information that the PCs can learn by asking the right questions. If PCs ask about a specific person or place, the townsfolk answer with something like what follows:

Sweyne: "The name sounds familiar. I think there's a story about him, something 'bout slaying a dragon and carrying away a rosy maiden. But it's an old tale. If you want more than stories, you ought to go speak with Lady Penrhys. She's the oldest person in these parts; my father had his land from her husband."

Famous warriors or renowned heroes: "There's a hero's stone 'bout halfway between the castles. It marks the last resting place of a great warrior who saved our entire land from barbarians."

Dangers or monsters in the area: "Lord Gwebli is plagued by shapeshifters that can take on the looks of a wolf, but they are more vicious than any wolf I've heard of. He sure could use any aid you'd be willing to give him."

Caddryn, Celwand, or Gareg: "Nope. We get a lot of people through here, and I don't recall meeting 'em."

Castles, nobility, and important people: "We pay tribute to Lord Gwebli. He lives in a castle northwest of here, and his family has owned this land for ages. They know all about the area. There used to be another noble family, down that south trail, but now it's only an old woman living there. Still, she has been 'round a long time, so if it is something old you want to know about, she can help you."

Other villages or towns: "You passed by most everything around here to reach the Three Crosses Inn. Except for the people livin' under Lord Gwebli's protection, Penrhys Castle is the only other place, but only Lady Penrhys lives there. You could try back farther up the road, mayhaps the other side of the Llanrhidran Marsh, around the town of Llanelli."

Magical stones, local myths, or folk tales: "There's a Giant's stone located right between the castles. It marks the tomb of a great hero, and the stone cries out if we're ever in danger from barbarians. It is also supposed to know any great hero who steps upon it. There is an old saying. Now how does it go ... oh yes, it's:

Os arwr dewr bydych chi
dringwch ar y maen a gweiddi.

The passage means: "If you will be a brave hero, climb up on the stone and shout."

Quoitine: "Never heard of him, and it's a strange name too, so I ought to 'member it."

If asked for directions, townsfolk can easily point the way to either Gwebli Castle or Penrhys Castle or inform the PCs that the turn for the Giant Stone marking the hero's grave is the fourth left on the northwest trail. It is the third right down the southwest trail, though this is not as well known. After speaking with the villagers, the PCs have three likely options: Lady Penrhys' Castle, Lord Gwebli's Castle, or the Giant's Stone marking the hero's grave. Don't force the PCs in a particular direction. Even if they should by some miracle go straight to the village by the sea and the "final" encounter, they can always be triumphantly marched by the villagers to Lord Gwebli's Castle to have their success properly celebrated (and of course be induced to kill the worgs).

Penrhys Castle

Penrhys (pen–REES) Castle was the home of a ruling family that divided the Windholm Peninsula with Lord Gwebli's family. Unfortunately, the Penrhys have fallen on hard times, and most of the family and nearest of kin are dead, the exception of sorts being the current occupant of Penrhys Castle.

Lady Penrhys is so out of touch with the real world, constantly living in the days of glory when her family ruled strongly, that she did not notice her own death several months ago. When she meets the PCs, Lady Penrhys mistakenly believes that they are hostages sent to her by her husband, who is supposedly conquering the lands to the east. Lady Penrhys demands complete compliance with her orders. Should the PCs hesitate or balk at her whims, she becomes so enraged that she attacks immediately. Read the following as the PCs near Castle Penrhys:

> The trail curves around a big hill and vanishes half-way to the top, where sits a ruined castle. The eastern wall is little more than knee-high. While the back of the castle seems to have fared better, even to the point where someone could live in it, the rest is merely a heap of stone that only hints at the edifice that once proudly dominated the surrounding country. Although the trail disappears half-way to the castle, it should not be hard to work your way through the vegetation covering the hillside.

There is no entrance from the back of the castle. If the PCs circle the structure, they alert Lady Penrhys to their presence. If the PCs climb the side of the hill and clamber over the eastern wall, read or paraphrase the following:

> From the top of the hill, you have a superior view of the ocean waves crashing against the sandy beach to the southeast. You can also see that much of the land around here has been left untamed for one reason or another. As for the castle, creepers and vines have wriggled their way over and between the stone walls. The only difference is that the vines on the inside wall are almost black, while the ones outside the walls are a soft brown. The only portion of the castle to retain a roof is what you might guess to have been a stable or an outer kitchen.
>
> From the doorway of this roofed building comes a human figure wearing what was once a gorgeous cloak. Her graceful walk and the tilt of her head suggest that she is the noble lady of this castle.
>
> "Good of you to come straight away," she says, approaching your group. You can now discern the blue tinge to her mummified skin. "No need to kill your kin with such well-mannered men standing in their stead. Follow me."
>
> As she twirls around, the cloak sweeps up, exposing blackened feet. A sickening odor blows past your face, and the woman's cheekbones look ready to burst through rotted skin.

If the PCs follow Lady Penrhys, feel free to devise miscellaneous chores for them until the PCs tire of the game, or Lady Penrhys feels that they are not working hard enough. If a PC asks about monsters or heroes, Lady Penrhys speaks eloquently about her husband in a confident, matter-of-fact tone. She fully believes she is relating events that took place, and she speaks authoritatively on the matter. Though she first notes that her husband has performed many deeds in distant lands, she tells about a "minor undertaking" of his right here on the Windholm Peninsula: the slaying of the beast known as "Sweyne's demise." She describes the 11' tall, four-armed beast—an ax in each horny hand—in vivid detail before settling down to recount her husband's steely courage and lively

wit. She does not refrain from slighting both Sweyne and Lord Gwebli, referring to the former as nothing but a mercenary looking to sell treasure, which she believes were diamonds stolen from the beast's lair. The latter she regards as a "sneaky cur deserving of the evils that beset him." Having told them of her husband's glory, Lady Penrhys commands the PCs back to work. Any slight to her husband or her family causes her to attack instantly.

After threatening the PCs for their failure to comply, Lady Penrhys calls out to imaginary guards (e.g., Anwas, Conyn, Ffodor, Mabsant, Peredur, etc.) while attacking the PCs herself. Lady Penrhys is a newly formed wight and should be treated as a wight in all respects, save that she lacks a wight's special attack and defense due to her recent creation. Although she cannot drain levels, feel free to describe the weakening chill that sweeps through the body of any PC hit. If she is not stopped, Lady Penrhys becomes a full-fledged wight within a month.

Lady Penrhys (wight): INT average (10); AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 19; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML 14; XP 650; *MM*/360 (modified); tattered cloak, gold ring (value 35 gp).

In the old stable that served as Lady Penrhys's abode, there is a straw mattress, a ruined linen nightshirt, and a hand-sized, painted wooden box with 40 gp inside. The castle environs are otherwise empty.

Although the trail westward eventually reaches the village by the sea, it is washed out and untended in many places and gives no benefit to the PCs' movement rates from this point onward.

Gwebli Castle

Brys ap Gwebli is lord of Gwebli Castle and the people inhabiting the surrounding lands. He is responsible for their protection and is currently hard-pressed to provide it. Recently, a pack of worgs—living in the environs just northwest of Castle Penrhys—began preying upon the sheep of Lord Gwebli's people, killing the herders who tried to stop them. Although the lord has led an assault against the

Lady Penrhys emerges from her castle.

worgs himself, a few (three) of these vicious creatures remain.

Many of Lord Gwebli's best fighters have been seriously wounded, and two of them killed, so that Brys now despairs of killing the pack before winter. Worse still, he has only two out of thirteen hunting dogs left alive. He is worried that winter might give the worgs the upper hand, and they could easily finish off his flock when the snow hampers his men.

Worgs (3): INT low (6); AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 17, 14, 9; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120; *MM*/362 (wolf).

This is all that remains of the pack, though the 17-hp worg is the leader and is still in relatively good health. The worgs are just beginning to develop their white winter coat; it makes an eerie combination with their red eyes and red-tinted ears. The wolves are cunning, imposing a –3 surprise penalty to PCs searching in the correct vicinity for their lair.

When Lord Gwebli hears of the PCs, he invites them to an evening feast of wild boar at Gwebli Castle. He then presents each of them with a gift, something appropriate to their station and within his means. After this, he relates his problem with the giant wolves over sweet bread and ale. If the PCs do not volunteer after hearing his people's woes, Lord Gwebli asks them for their aid.

Shortly after speaking with the PCs, Lord Gwebli realizes that they are searching for the cliff top next to the village by the sea. He knows the old stories about Sweyne, but he does not let the PCs know that. Although it goes against his sense of fair play, he does not answer any queries regarding Sweyne or the like until the PCs agree to kill the worgs. If the PCs refuse, he demands that they leave the Windholm Peninsula by noon the next day, and he and his remaining warriors force them to do so if they have not departed. He also notifies Cillau and the village by the sea not to give the PCs hospitality or assistance.

If the PCs accept, Lord Gwebli tells them that the monster Sweyne battled is supposed to live on the cliff top near the village by the sea. Once he has answered any other questions they have, including promising to have a lad lead them to the village after they kill the worgs, Lord Gwebli tells the PCs of his strategy for killing the wolves. The plan is simply to have all able-bodied people armed with spears surround the worgs' lair, which is located northwest of Penrhys Castle. His intention is to tighten the circle enough to put the worgs on the defensive but not so much that they feel hopelessly entrapped and attempt a reckless plunge through the circle of armed men. Both hunting hounds are to run around at the edge of the circle and fill any space through which the worgs might bolt. The PCs' duty is to spread out, enter the circle, and fight against the worgs. Though it is a dangerous setup, it has worked for Lord Gwebli in his past encounters with the beasts. It is the only certain way to force a confrontation since the pack simply runs from a head-on challenge; the worgs only have a 10% chance per round of escaping from the circle.

If the PCs are incapable of facing the worgs without help, Lord Gwebli offers his own sword and, if desperately needed, those of the three men still able to face the worgs in toe-to-toe combat. Doing so weakens the circle containing the worgs, giving the giant wolves an additional 10% bonus to escape for each warrior, including Lord Gwebli, helping the PCs.

Lord Gwebli, human male F3: AL LG; AC 5; MV 12; hp 15; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 14; ML 15; brigandine armor, buckler, longsword, dagger.

Men-at-arms (3): AL LG; AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 6, 5, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (spear); roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; ML 13; leather armor, buckler, spear, dagger.

The Screaming Stone

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs reach this location:

> As you travel up and down the gentle slope of the hills, you begin to make out a large rock formation ahead. The rough wind forces you to squint and wipe away tears, but it looks as if the formation is actually an 8' tall boulder set atop numerous smaller stones. Only a giant would have been capable of picking up such a colossal slab of stone and placing it atop the other rocks.
>
> Behind the great boulder to the west is a smaller mound of stones, possibly a monument or cairn. Maybe it is the gravesite for the brave men who fought alongside the champion against the invading barbarians. Within five feet of the cairn lie the bones of a giant dog or wolf.

Any PC who clambers on top of the giant boulder and shouts at the top of his lungs has a chance of waking the boulder, which is in fact a sleeping galeb duhr.

Galeb duhr: INT very (11); AL N; AC –2; MV 6; HD 8; hp 44; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2–16; SA spells, animate boulders; SD immune to lightning and normal fire; MR 20%; SZ L (8' high); ML 17; XP 8,000; *MM*/122; three onyx stones (100 gp each), two uncut emeralds (250 gp each).

The chance to wake the galeb duhr depends on the PC's Constitution: Warriors must make a Constitution check at –6, while all other classes make a Constitution Check at –10 to awaken the snoozing galeb duhr. Otherwise, the galeb duhr awakes only if someone disturbs the large cairn to the west or attacks him. In either of these cases, he does not speak to the violators but simply drives them off by hurting but not killing them.

If the galeb duhr is awakened properly by a scream, read or paraphrase the following:

> You feel the boulder rumble beneath you, and you are forced to leap off before being thrown violently to the ground.
>
> "Well, well," a deep and slow voice declares as the boulder unfolds itself, revealing stumpy arms and legs of stone. "That was a mighty loud whisper for one so small. Why do you wake me from my slumber?"

The galeb duhr converses with those who treat him politely, all the while humming as the PCs ask their questions. The galeb duhr has listened to the conversations of women from the village by the sea who spread their newly washed clothes on his back and gazed out at the distant

ocean. He remembers their talk of the hero Sweyne and directs the PCs to the village by the sea. If questioned about the wolf bones, the galeb duhr mentions that he killed the worg for digging up the stones in the cairn. There was a large pack of them, but since he killed that one, the worgs have not returned to the area.

The galeb duhr is uninterested in helping to kill the worgs; he advises the PCs in his patient and slow voice to protect their kin just as he guards his own.

If the PCs defeat the galeb duhr and dig under the cairn, they find bones, rusted bits of armor and weapons, and nothing more.

Village by the Sea

The village by the sea is but a large hamlet. It has never had any name other than "village by the sea." The men who live here primarily fish for a living, though both the men and women are working steadily to convert the poor soil into acceptable farmland. The villagers pay tribute to Lord Gwebli every year and occasionally serve as additional shepherds for his flocks during busy times. Living by the providence of the fickle sea and the crops of poor soil is not easy, but the people here are generally content with their lot.

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach the seaside village from either of the two trails that lead here:

> The village ahead of you lies atop a medium-sized hill at the southwest tip of the Windholm Peninsula. The cliff at the far western edge of the village drops hundreds of feet to the sea below. North and to your right is a large hill that rises about hundred feet above the village, protecting it from the full force of the wind. To your left, the fields slope down hundreds of yards to end at another, shorter sea cliff.
>
> You can see a number of small boats bobbing on the waves; they are filled with men working hard to make a daily living. You also notice women carrying huge woven baskets brimming with seaweed. Some of them have reached the harvested fields and are spreading seaweed on the barren soil.

The villagers hope that the seaweed will nourish the village soil and render it suitable for farming.

Any of the older village folk can recall the tales of Sweyne's battles with the "monster," including Sweyne's final defeat. Feel free to embellish the stories, and make certain that the description of the creature is fittingly horrifying—perhaps a gigantic Fomorian or something the PCs have never faced before. Every adult villager knows that the creature is rumored to roam the land atop the big cliff.

If the PCs mention Caddryn, Celwand, or Gareg, most of the village folk recall the names as those of adventurers who sought the monster. They also remember that the three adventurers did not claim to have fought the beast.

The Cliffs

There are three trails leading to the beast's lair: two that follow the top of the cliff (300' elevation), and one trail that runs along the actual cliff face about 60 feet from the top. Were it not for the gorse, one could clamber up and down the steep but climbable first 60 feet of the cliff face. The trail runs along the last buckle of earth at the bottom of the slope; from this point all the way down to the beach 240 feet below, the cliff face is nearly perpendicular. Read the following description to the PCs when they are ready to hike up to find the quoitine:

> You face the large hill that rises about 100 feet above your heads. Off to your left is the end of the peninsula, a sheer cliff face that runs as far as the eye can see in both directions. From here, you see three trails.
>
> The trail to the left circles northwest around the large hill and runs along a ridge on the cliff face itself. Though the ridge is not wide and the left side falls away sharply, the trail is covered so thickly with gorse that falling off is nigh impossible. You discern that the trail swoops up to the cliff top at the end. The left trail would completely hide you from view of all but those at the very edge of the cliff.
>
> The second trail, which runs directly up the side of the large hill, is a straightforward hike. It apparently runs along the top of the hill, maybe twenty yards from the cliff edge.
>
> Off to the far right, you notice a third faint trail that runs parallel to the middle path; it too would probably lead to the beast's lair. Although none of the trails require climbing rope, traversing them could prove arduous.

The left trail—the one located 60 feet from the top of the cliff—is described in "The Left Trail" section. Treat the middle and right trails as the same, since both travel up the side of the hill and run along the top of the cliff (not along the cliff face). Refer to "The Middle & Right Trails" section for details.

The Left Trail

Read or paraphrase the following text if the PCs elect to circumvent the hill by walking along the left trail that clings to the cliff face:

> Near the start of the trail, you spot the carcass of a long dead sheep partially buried in the dirt.

The sheep was killed by worgs some time ago. Allow the PCs to react, then continue reading the following when they are satisfied that the dead sheep presents no danger:

> You continue walking along the trail as it dips and rises according to the whims of the cliff. You hear the ocean waves crash against the beach below.
>
> Though it was not evident from the village or even the trailhead, you notice the buried remains of a shipwreck in the sand below. The forward portion of the ship has not yet succumbed to the waves; its bowsprit juts out of the sand like the proud horn of a unicorn.

The gorse growing on the cliffside trail is dense. In many places, the PCs must push through large patches of the prickly plants, reducing their movement by half. As the PCs are navigating a particularly tough patch, a shadow passes over them, and the shrill cry of a giant bird cleaves the air. One round later, seven

A startled hero stands precariously on the cliffs of Windholm.

huge ravens swoop down and attack the PCs. They hope to cause one or more PCs to fall off the trail, but the dim ravens do not realize that the thick gorse keeps the PCs from being knocked off. Any PC hit by two or more birds in the same round, however, must make a Dexterity check to avoid falling into the prickly plants; PCs entangled in the gorse lose one round freeing themselves and have no Dexterity adjustment to their AC. The ravens do not hesitate to fly to safety if the PCs are defeating them. Since the birds swoop down and then rise up with each attack, the PCs receive no bonus attack for an enemy disengaging from combat.

PCs with missile weapons already in hand are allowed one normal attack before the huge ravens fly out of range. Any raven reduced to 1 hp cannot fly; it glides down 100 feet or so and perches on an outcropping until it recovers.

Huge ravens (7): INT animal (1); AL N; AC 6; MV 1, fly 27 (C); HD 1–1; hp 7, 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–2; SZ M; ML 11; XP 35; *MM*/27 (bird).

Having gone through all of this trouble, the PCs gain the benefit of being allowed their normal chance to surprise the legendary beast who guards the quoitine. They arrive at the creature's lair three turns after they start down this path, assuming their normal movement rate is 12 and they neither rest on the trail nor turn back for one reason or another.

The Middle & Right Trails

Read the following if the PCs take the middle or right trail:

> You begin to climb up the steep slope of the hill, hunched over to keep your hands free to catch yourself should you stumble. Though your ascent is laborious, you reach the top of the hill after a short climb. The cliff edge is twenty yards to your left.
>
> The wind welcomes your arrival by sweeping even more fiercely across the hill. You must squint constantly. Occasionally, you must cover your eyes during particularly severe gusts. Not content simply to make your eyes water like a wild river, the wind and cold of late autumn have conspired to make your nose run profusely and your ears ache constantly.

Any PC venturing to the edge of the cliff can make an Observation proficiency check (or an Intelligence check at –4). If successful, the PC can make out the shipwreck below. The PC also inadvertently startles the huge ravens that nest just below the top of the cliff (see "The Left Path" above for the ravens' statistics). The ravens fly out and circle above the PC. Should the PC remain at the cliff edge another round (this applies to anyone trying to make out the shipwreck), the ravens swoop down and attempt to knock the PC over the side of the cliff. If the PC is hit by two or more ravens, he must make a successful Dexterity check to avoid tumbling over the side. A PC who makes a successful Tumbling proficiency check can tumble down the cliff and land on the Left Path—60 feet below the top of the cliff—sustaining only 3d4 points of damage. A PC who fails his Tumbling check falls the remaining 240 feet of the cliff to his death. (If the PC does not have the Tumbling proficiency, the DM can let the PC make a Strength check to grab a rocky outcropping before plummeting to his death.)

PCs can traverse the barren, windswept cliff top without difficulty. They arrive at the final encounter within two turns if on the middle path, or three turns if on the right path (given a normal move of 12).

Unless the PCs take exceptional precautions to hide themselves—the clifftop provides almost no cover—they have no chance of surprising the quoitine's guardian: a xorn. The xorn uses its camouflage ability to improve its chances of surprising the PCs (impose a –5 penalty on the PCs' surprise roll).

Windholm Peninsula Random Encounter Table

Random encounters on Windholm Peninsula are rare. The DM may check for a random encounter twice per day and once per night; an encounter occurs on a roll of 1 on 1d6. The DM should choose from the encounters below:

1. Water leapers (2d8): INT semi (2); AL NE; AC 8; MV swim 12 (glide 30 feet); HD 1–1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA shriek, leap; SZ S (3' long); ML 10; XP 65; *HR3*. Water leapers look like large toads with a fishlike tail instead of back legs and flying-fish style fin-wings instead of front legs. Their mouths are full of sharp teeth.

This encounter occurs only near a river or lake. The water leapers' leap attack is treated as a normal melee attack. The water leapers' piercing shriek causes every creature within 30 yards to save vs. spell or be unable to take any action for the next round. A water leaper may not bite on the same round it shrieks.

2. Fachan (1): INT low (7); AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (1d8+3 with battle axe); SA 18/50 Strength (+1 to attack, +3 damage); SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 270; *HR3*.

The fachan is an exile from a distant northern land who has found sanctuary in the misty bogs of Llanrhidran Marsh, attacking travelers who wander too close to the mire. The fachan prefers to attack lone victims, but it is hungry for human flesh. Its appearance is very striking; it has one leg placed centrally under its body, one arm sprouting from the middle of its chest, and one eye in the middle of its face. The fachan is surprisingly quick and agile.

The fachan wields a large stone axe. If successfully disarmed, the fachan retreats into the marsh. Deep in the Llanrhidran Marsh is the fachan's lair, hidden amid a stand of trees. Its treasure includes a metal shield (nonmagical), a rotted pouch containing 23 gp, and a *spear +1*.

3. Thornslingers (1d4): INT non (0); AL N; AC 8; MV 0; HD 4; hp 15 each; THAC0 nil; #AT 1 volley; Dmg 2–8; SA dew; SZ M (4' radius); ML 9; XP 270; *MM*/291.

These carnivorous, spidery plants have yellow blossoms and lie close to the ground. They attack living creatures within 30 feet by firing thorns in all directions, automatically hitting every creature within range; damage from the thorns is 2–8 points of damage (1 hp per thorn).

A finely wrought dagger lies five feet from a thornslinger. The dagger has a *magic mouth* spell cast upon it; when touched, the dagger says, *"I am the property of Lord Penrhys. Return me to Castle Penrhys at once!"* Once the *magic mouth* has spoken, the magic fades and the dagger's nonmagical nature can be confirmed. The dagger was left here by an unknown prankster hoping to lure travelers to their doom at Penrhys Castle. Lady Penrhys knows nothing about the dagger.

4. Kenku (2d4): INT average (9); AL N; AC 5; MV 6, fly 18 (D); HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1–4/1–4/1–6 or by weapon type; SD skills as 4th-level Thieves; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 13; XP 175; *MM*/211; quarterstaff, 2d4 gp each.

These kenku wear robes with cowls to conceal their avian features. They travel the roadways and trails, approaching the PCs disguised as pilgrims or druids. They demand that each PC pays 3 gp for safe passage. Those who decline to pay are attacked.

The Final Dilemma

The legendary creature the PCs must face is a xorn that has been trapped on Windholm Peninsula for centuries. The following is the monster's story.

Having been near an extraplanar rift between the Elemental Plane of Earth and the Prime Material Plane, the young xorn burrowed through the unstable gate by accident and ended up on Windholm Peninsula. By the time it realized its mistake, the gate had collapsed; the creature was trapped. The burrowing action of the creature naturally forced an enormous amount of elemental earth through the transitory gate, and contained within the detritus was the quoitine. The xorn jealously hoards this debris as a keepsake; the minerals are the beast's sole reminder of home. It is not willing to part with the quoitine, even though the rare mineral does not agree with its stomach and provides little sustenance.

When the xorn first arrived, it roamed freely and killed any shepherd who would not willingly hand over his metal implements. After its near-death encounter with Sweyne, the young xorn became terrified of humans and refused to interact with them anymore; it could not bear the thought of dying alone on this mineral forsaken plane.

Sweyne played on the xorn's terror successfully until the beast realized its mementos of home would eventually disappear, at which time the xorn became enraged and killed Sweyne. The xorn recuperated from the battle but decided to keep plunging into the earth for food. From this point on, however, the xorn murdered any lone traveler who wandered through its territory. The xorn was afraid that, if someone saw it, the person would gather other people and return to kill it. With larger groups of people, the xorn uses its phase ability to burst out of the ground, ram into the group, then vanish from sight (i.e., phase back into the earth). This usually has the desired effect of sending the group running for their lives. Because the xorn did not kill anyone in a group where someone could escape, the village folk never became desperate or angry enough to try to hunt it down and kill it; they simply avoided the xorn's territory.

The xorn remained a mystery—a bogeyman feared by all the locals. It was left completely alone until three adventurers named Caddryn, Celwand, and Gareg encountered the beast. The adventurers used the threat of telling the world about the xorn to spare their lives and obtain one small piece of inferior quoitine each. In return, they promised never to come back and never to tell anyone about the xorn. After much persuasion, the xorn reluctantly agreed, and the three adventurers escaped with their quoitine. True to their word, they never spoke of the xorn or

revealed its location. This is the state of affairs when the PCs arrive.

Xorn: INT average (10); AL N; AC –2; MV 9, burrow 9; HD 7+7; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 1–3 (×3)/ 6–24; SA –5 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls; SD immune to cold and fire; electrical attacks cause half or no damage; edged weapons inflict half damage; SZ M (5' tall); ML 16; XP 4,000; *MM*/367.

The xorn's lair is simply a small indentation in the earth where it has clustered all the quoitine and other rocks together. From a distance, the quoitine appears to be roughly in the shape of a house: a large slab of rock with quoitine embedded in it has been laid across the top of two small piles of rocks also containing quoitine. Scattered around the xorn's lair are several chips of inferior quoitine no bigger than a halfling's palm.

When alerted to the PCs' presence, the xorn does not attack immediately if the party consists of three or more people. It instead assumes its guard position: the xorn phases into the earth, leaving visible only the tip of its mouth and its three eyes watching in all directions under the cover of the large slab. If the PCs approach the quoitine, the xorn bursts forth and rams into the biggest PC with its mouth closed. If the xorn hits, it sends the PC flying backward 1d3 × 10 feet and causes 1 point of damage. The xorn then phases into the earth. Describe what happened to the PCs without giving away the nature of the creature: "A boulder burst from the ground and smashed into you, then disappeared," or "A giant fist covered with eyes formed out of the earth and punched you." Do not reveal that the attacker is a monster, especially not that it is a xorn, until the PCs figure it out or the xorn has attacked a few more times.

The previous party's method of dealing with the xorn does not work for the PCs, since Gaerist has asked for a superior chunk of quoitine, which can only be pried out of the large covering slab or the rocks in the piles supporting it. This process would take about a turn per chunk of quoitine desired, and the xorn does not part with it unless the PCs can convince it that they can return the xorn to its home (the Elemental Plane of Earth). Although the inferior quoitine can simply be picked up near the lair, the xorn defends its lair and attempts to regain any quoitine the PCs take.

PCs can speak with the xorn—its voice booms out of its throat like an erupting volcano—and it is willing to listen to the PCs. It gives an abbreviated account of its past if asked, but the xorn leaves out unsavory portions, such as killing travelers. The xorn loudly bemoans the fact that it is trapped here. It might occur to the PCs that Gaerist could manufacture a magical item to send the xorn home. If the PCs use this line of reasoning with the xorn, it allows the PCs—after quite a bit of convincing and the promise of a means to send it home—to pry out one piece of superior quoitine. Furthermore, the xorn directs them to a flawless chunk if the PCs explain that the magical item will work better with it. If returned home, the xorn leaves all the remaining quoitine to the PCs.

If the PCs present Gaerist with this plan, he agrees to fashion the magical item as long as he gets all the quoitine, for which he pays the PCs handsomely once they bring it to him. Gaerist successfully fashions a *stone of controlling earth elementals* in one month. (Gaerist has a base 71% chance of success but receives a +20% bonus if a piece of flawless quoitine is used.) If Gaerist fails, the PCs must figure out what to do with the incensed xorn. It takes a fast-talking PC to retrieve another chunk from it. Assuming Gaerist succeeds, PCs can use the quoitine-enchanted *stone* to summon an earth elemental. Since the earth elemental returns to the Elemental Plane of Earth at the end of its summons, the PCs can command it to take the xorn back with it. The elemental embraces the xorn in a bear hug, and both disappear through the portal.

The *stone of earth elemental summoning* created by Gaerist can be used twice if superior quoitine is used in its construction, three times if flawless quoitine is used. Gaerist asks that the PCs return the *stone* once they have completed their task and enabled the xorn to return to its home plane.

There are other options, such as tricking, stealing from, or killing the xorn. These are up to the DM to adjudicate. In general, the xorn is smart enough to be wary and never leaves its lair once it knows the PCs want the quoitine. If desperate, the xorn threatens to gobble up the quoitine, despite the indigestion this causes. The xorn loathes to leave the immediate vicinity not only because of its terrifying encounters with Sweyne but also because the area has a certain resonance with the Elemental Plane of Earth that makes this place more comfortable to the xorn than anywhere else it has been on this desolate plane.

Concluding the Adventure

This adventure serves as an excellent starting point for new characters. Whatever course the PCs pursue is bound to carry them beyond this adventure. Sending the xorn home and gathering the quoitine means that the PCs have to return in a month's time after reaching Gaerist to free the xorn. While Gaerist is creating the magical item, the PCs could train or embark on another adventure. Making false promises to the xorn could have repercussions down the road, as the xorn stews and stews over the PCs' betrayal. Of course, double-crossing Gaerist is even more dangerous, since a high-level Mage has many interesting recourses.

If the PCs killed the worgs, Lord Gwebli feels indebted to them. He could be used by the DM to provide information about other adventures, or he could allow the PCs to use his castle as a base of operations. The Three Crosses Inn in Cillau is a popular inn and always has a number of interesting patrons, many of whom could serve to draw the PCs into further adventures.

Another possibility is that all the Penrhys family is not dead. Any survivor returning home might learn that the PCs asked about or went to the ancestral home. If the PCs killed Lady Penrhys, a *speak with dead* spell would lay the blame squarely at their feet. A vengeful relative could prove an engaging adversary for the party, either attacking them outright while screaming about her murder or working behind the scenes to make the PCs' lives difficult in other adventures. After working behind the scenes for a while, the vengeful relative could then confront the PCs with a posse of hired thugs. Ω

The tentacled sentinel of Uthtower invites brave heroes to their doom.

EYE OF MYRKUL

BY ERIC L. BOYD

Legacy of the dead

Artwork and Cartography by Stephen Daniele

Eric has not been seen much of late in the Realms Above, but he resurfaced long enough to give us this peek into the Mere of Dead Men.

"Eye of Myrkul" is an AD&D® scenario for 5–7 characters of levels 6–8 (about 56 total levels). A good balance of character classes is recommended, and healing magics are particularly important. Although it is not required to run this adventure, the *Cult of the Dragon* supplement contains information the DM might find helpful.

This is the final adventure in a series of stand-alone adventures set in the Mere of Dead Men. It is not necessary for the PCs to have completed any of the previous adventures (in Issues #69–72) to enjoy this one. It is assumed, however, that the PCs have recovered at least one *ring of Myrkul* (see "New Magical Items" sidebar) from an evil NPC, either during the course of one of the previous adventures or in an adventure of the DM's devising (which need not have been located in the Mere of Dead Men, but should be located in the general vicinity). Also, before running the adventure, the DM should review the information given in the sidebar on page 27, as it has been updated from previous incarnations.

Adventure Background

This adventure presumes one of three scenarios have unfolded leading up to the events described hereafter.

In the first scenario, the PCs have been participating in one or more adventures set in the Mere, and they are acquainted with the Paladin Sir Justin Melenikus and his company of Helmite Priests who have established a temporary base amid the ruins of Iniarv's Tower.

In the second scenario, the PCs are simply responding to Sir Justin's request for adventuring bands to aid him in securing the safety of travelers along the High Road. They are headed to the ruins of Iniarv's Tower to meet with the Paladin and assist him in his cause.

In the third scenario, the PCs are traveling along the High Road in

either direction when they decide to make camp in the ruins of Iniarv's Tower. From information obtained at the last civilized outpost where they stopped, the PCs are aware that a group of Helm's followers have recently established a base in the ruins and that their encampment is a relatively secure place in which to spend the night.

For the Player Characters

The following boxed text assumes that the PCs have encountered Sir Justin previously and that this is not their first visit to Iniarv's Tower. The DM should adjust the description if necessary:

> As you mount a low rise along the High Road, Iniarv's Tower can be seen atop a low hillock overlooking the well traveled trade route below. The partially rebuilt ruins offer relative safety in the company of Sir Justin Melenikus and the watchers of Helm along the edge of the dark waters of the Mere of Dead Men.
>
> Drawing closer to the former sorcerer's keep, however, you begin to make out evidence of a recent battle. The stone walls of Iniarv's Tower are heavily pitted, as if scoured by acid, and an acrid tang wafts across the terrain. Clouds of smoke you mistook previously for evidence of cooking fires drift across the battlements, suggesting still smoldering fires within the central ward. It is eerily quiet, as if all the animal life in the region as well as the inhabitants of the tower have fled.

For the Dungeon Master

The Mere of Dead Men has long been a blight on the Twilit Land, as the coastal territories between Waterdeep and Neverwinter and between the Sword Mountains and the Sea of Swords have long been known, but the area was once home to a thriving kingdom in the early days of human settlement before the land was blanketed with the great saltwater marsh.

Beginning with the establishment of the free city of Tavaray in the Year of the Phandar (–50 DR), a great wave of settlement spread up the Sword Coast and the great river valleys of the Savage Frontier. As part of that tide of immigration, the rolling hills that led down from the central Sword Mountains to the Trackless Sea were slowly settled in the first century DR by fishermen, hunters, and loggers, for the region was rich in natural resources. The first settlement of any size in the region was a small town established in the Year of Gleaming Frost (64 DR) along the shores of a small bay protected from the sea's worst storms by a natural breakwater. The settlement attracted immigrants seeking the promise of pristine lands.

The first human lord to claim power in the Twilit Land was Uth Myrmoran, an exiled lord of the free city of Tavaray who sought to build his own realm in the tradition of the ancient empires of the South. In the Year of the Risen Towers (146 DR), the ambitious lord erected the Uthtower atop a rocky pinnacle that overlooked the fledgling port and proclaimed himself king. There was little resistance from the local populace to the self-anointed monarch's seizure of power, for the inhabitants of the settlement had begun to see the need for some form of government. The presence of an elite company of Shoon mercenaries hired by King Uth I undoubtedly contributed to the lack of dissent among the region's inhabitants, as did the new monarch's wealth, much of which found its way into the purses of locally prominent individuals who might have otherwise opposed his rule.

From these modest beginnings, the Royal House of Myrmoran forged a small but thriving realm known by the same name as its traditional royal seat. Crown Prince Ornoth, the eldest son of Uthtower's first king, succeeded his father in the Year of Scattered Stars (168 DR), although he had been exercising a great deal of authority for nearly a decade as the king's faculties faded. After his coronation, King Ornoth I ennobled seven prominent allies who had long served as counselors. They formed the Council of Lords, a body whose membership was thereafter composed of the patriarchs and, occasionally, matriarchs of the seven noble houses.

Upon the sudden death of King Ornoth I in the Year of the Broken Lands (191 DR), the kingdom was briefly plunged into chaos as the late monarch's twin sons and their camps each pressed their claim to the throne of Uthtower. To avert a civil war, the Council of Lords decreed that Prince Uth would succeed his father, as he had preceded the birth of his brother by a few minutes. To appease the backers of Prince Ornoth's claim, however, the nobles decreed that the lightly settled lands to the north would form a new kingdom ruled by the younger twin, with the border between the two lands demarcated by the westernmost peak of the Maruutdin (as the northern Sword Mountains were known). Thus Prince Uth II was crowned the third king of Uthtower, and Prince Ornoth II was crowned the first king of Yarlith, and all was settled amicably between the brothers and the two realms.

To avert any argument over who would bear their late father's somewhat plain coronet, the twin monarchs were enthroned with identical regalia commissioned for the occasion. The Twin Crowns of Myrmoran were fashioned by Iniarv, the oft-absent Mage Royal of Uthtower. Iniarv was a sorcerer who had established himself in an imposing tower in the foothills some 30 miles to the east after winning the confidence of Uthtower's second sovereign shortly after his arrival in the region. It was widely rumored that Iniarv had woven a powerful enchantment into the brothers' crowns, for they ruled the two realms ably for many years, well beyond the lifespans of most men. Furthermore, the twin monarchs never seemed to disagree in even the smallest matter, almost as if they were linked in mind.

Both sovereigns died peacefully in their sleep in the Year of the Weeping Kingdom (272 DR), and they were succeeded by younger heirs, several generations removed. Although the northern and southern branches of the Royal House of Myrmoran were never again so closely allied, the two realms maintained amicable relations for centuries thereafter, and their small armies often fought side-by-side against the orcs and other monstrous denizens of the North.

Creation of the Mere

In the end, first Yarlith and then Uthtower fell to the same forces that later swept aside Phalorm, the Realm of Three Crowns, more commonly known as the Fallen Kingdom. In the century that followed Phalorm's founding in the Year of Trials Arcane (523 DR), wave after wave of orcs poured from the mountains and wastelands to assault the human and demihuman realms located along the Sword Coast and the Dessarin and Delimbiyr river valleys. The fall of all three realms began with the gathering of a great orc horde from the teaming caverns of the Spine of the World mountain range in the Year of the Normiir (611 DR). The Everhorde, as the illithid-led army of orcs was named, smashed Yarlith and its small army, then besieged the independent trading city of Neverwinter, formally known as Eigersstor. The armies of Phalorm, Uthtower, and other allied realms rushed north in response, but they were too late to avert the catastrophe in Yarlith.

The allied armies' arrival lifted the siege of Neverwinter, thanks in part to the efforts of Palarandusk the Sun Dragon (see *DRAGON® Magazine* issue #252). For the next year, in battle after battle, the warriors of Phalorm, Uthtower, and other communities of the North strove desperately to defeat this huge army of orcs. The Everhorde was finally shattered in the Year of the Jester's Smile (612 DR) in the Battle of Firetears south of the site of present-day Triboar—but at great cost to the allied armies.

While Uthtower's much shrunken army returned to the seacoast realm immediately, the army of Phalorm remained in the region for two more years, mopping up the smaller orc bands into which the Everhorde had fragmented.

In the Year of the Shattered Scepter (614 DR), with the bulk of Phalorm's armies still in the far north, orc hordes arose in the High Moor, the southern Greypeak Mountains, and in the Fields of the Dead. They marched on the Realm of Three Crowns. Phalorm's army rushed south to help defend against the orc horde, and the two armies met in the Battle of Shrouded Stars. What remained of the Army of the North eventually regrouped in the Year of the Lamia's Kiss (615 DR) at Iniarv's Tower, named for its long-vanished owner and garrisoned by a company of Uthtower's soldiers. Although the defenders held out valiantly against the resultant siege, the magics they unleashed against the orcs disturbed Iniarv, who had since become a lich. Unbeknownst to the people of Uthtower, the archmage had passed into undeath and continued to dwell in the depths of the tower's crypts. Wroth with anger, Iniarv unleashed devastating spells against both armies. Once again, Phalorm's remaining warriors were driven back, this time in the company of Uthtower's small army, and a sea of orcs poured into the long-sheltered lands of Uthtower.

As his kingdom crumbled about his throne, King Uth VII dispatched an emissary to Iniarv, beseeching the lich to honor his alliance with the people of Uthtower and dispatch the invading orcs. With cruel humor, Iniarv honored the request by unleashing spells that caused the ocean to rise up and inundate the land. Countless humans, demihumans, and orcs were drowned in the resultant flood. When the waters receded, they left behind a sprawling saltwater mere that smothered the once-verdant land, transforming its topography and spelling the doom of the centuries-old kingdom of Uth. Those humans and demihumans who survived the deluge quickly fled to other realms, while the orcs retreated to the Sword Mountains.

Ebondeath's Reign

In the centuries that ensued, the Mere of Dead Men grew ever larger, slowly inundating the land between the Trackless Sea and the High Road no matter how far back the High Road was moved toward the foothills of the Sword Mountains. Attempts to reestablish settlements in the inland regions of what were once the uplands of Uthtower failed time and time again, sunk beneath the creeping waters of the Mere.

In the wake of its creation, the Mere of Dead Men quickly became home to all manner of monsters, both living and undead, and was largely avoided by the civilized races as a result. The first black wyrm to establish himself in the Mere of Dead Men was Chardansearavitriol, or Ebondeath, an old dragon who seized the crumbling ruins of the Uthtower and the catacombs beneath it as his lair in the Year of the Lone Lark (631 DR). Chardansearavitriol reigned supreme and unchallenged over his demesne for centuries. Although the dragon preyed regularly on travelers seeking to skirt the Mere of Dead Men, his attacks more frequently targeted the orcs of the Sword Mountains, keeping their numbers low as a result.

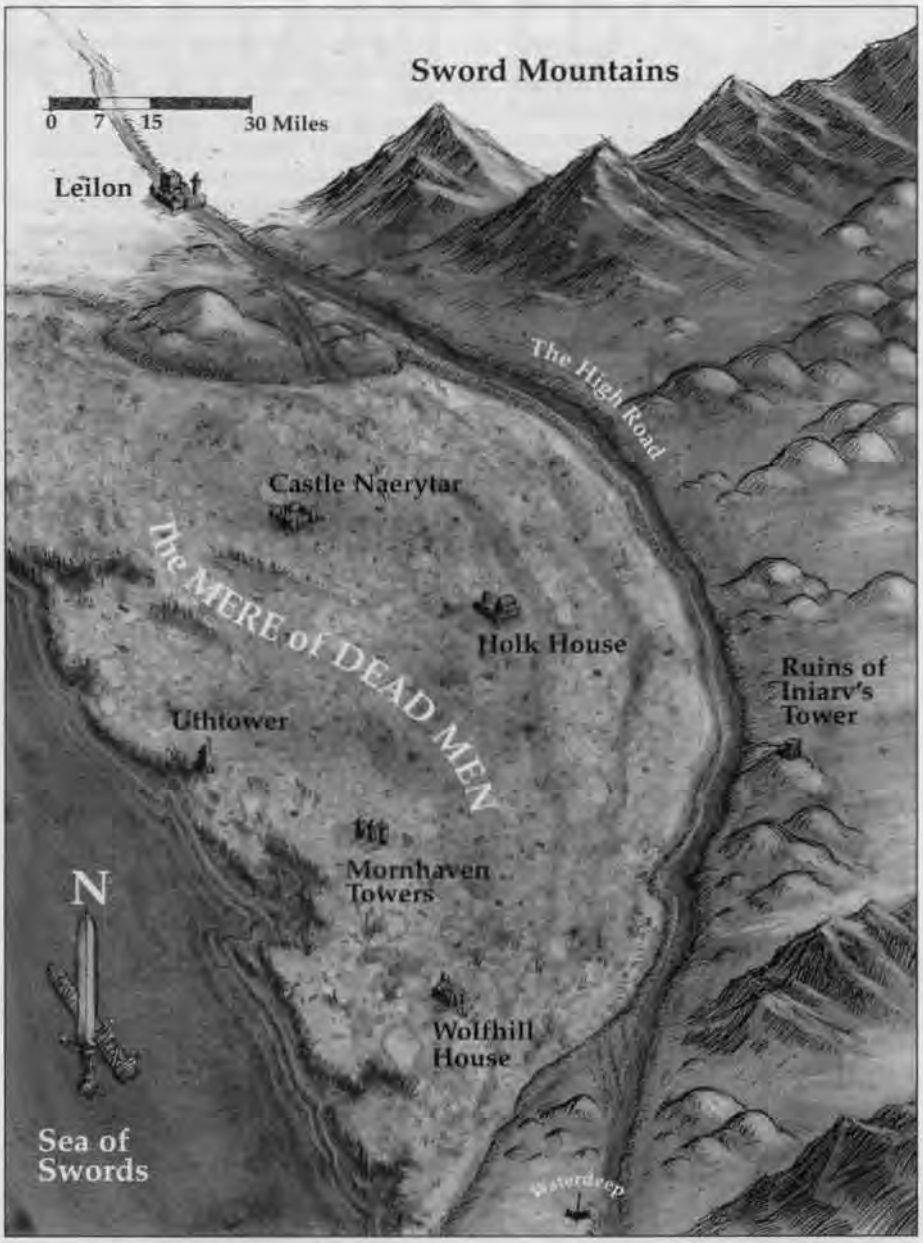
In the Year of the Spouting Fish (922 DR), Chardansearavitriol vanished without a trace, giving rise to speculations that the wyrm had been slain, had relocated elsewhere, or had chosen to withdraw into the heart of the saltwater swamp and never emerge. In truth, the very old black dragon had heeded the entreaties of Strongor Bonebag, a charismatic Priest of Myrkul with ties to the burgeoning Cult of the Dragon, and had been transformed into a dracolich. The Cult cell headed by Strongor was unique in its interpretations of the teachings of both Myrkul and Sammaster. Strongor preached that there would come a day when Myrkul would absorb all of the mortal world into his realm. When that process occurred, claimed Strongor, the gods of the living would be discarded and replaced by a pantheon of ascended dracolich powers. In anticipation of the many years that would unfold hence, Chardansearavitriol's lair, the ancient Uthtower, was transformed into a great temple of stone and scoured bone known as the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath. In it the Ebondeath Sect, as the cultist called themselves, could dwell while attending to and venerating their preascendant god.

Strongor's sudden death less than a decade later effectively aborted his efforts to extend the sect's reach across the North. Nevertheless, Chardansearavitriol, who cared more for the acquisition of personal power than for the late Strongor's divinely inspired vision, continued to be slavishly attended by those Dragon Cultists who remained in his service, some of whom were transformed into undead servitors. Ebondeath's isolation from the outside world was rein-

forced by the emergence of the orcish realm of Uruth Ukrypt in the northern Sword Mountains circa 930 DR and the subsequent collapse of trade along the High Road, for the abatement of the dragon's depredations had allowed the orcish population in the region to skyrocket. Over time, Ebondeath passed into the realm of legend. By the fall of Uruth Ukrypt in the Year of Crimson Magics (1026 DR), his acts had been largely forgotten among the civilized races. For nearly two centuries, Chardansearavitriol slumbered undisturbed in the heart of the Mere of Dead Men, venerated by his dwindling cult. He roused himself only to defend his demesne against draconic intruders and those unlucky enough to stumble across his lair.

The draconic ruler's long tenure as Suzerain of the Mere came to an effective end rather suddenly in the Year of the Dragon Altar (1202 DR). Ere his death at the end of the Time of Troubles in the Year of Shadows (1358 DR), the power of Myrkul always waxed when an infrequent and relatively unknown astronomical phenomenon known as the Eye of Myrkul appeared in the night sky. This event involving the passage of a new moon through a certain ring of seven stars associated with an old symbol of Mystra. Under the baleful Eye of Myrkul, Chardansearavitriol's physical form crumbled into dust and bones atop the altar of Myrkul. Instead of abandoning their sect's centuries-old vigil, those few Dragon Cultists who remained in the dracolich's service hailed his transformation as the physical manifestation of the long-heralded second stage of the divine ascension that Strongor had preached long ago.

Once again, worshipers of the Lord of Bones flocked to the secret temple at the heart of the Mere, and the Ebondeath Sect grew strong under a new generation of leaders, awaiting the night when once again the Eye of Myrkul graced the sky. A kernel of truth must have resided in Strongor's teachings, for Chardansearavitriol survived the collapse of his physical form as a spirit tethered to his physical remains, a state in which he remains today. Given the resemblance of Strongor's teachings to a debased pursuit of Ossavitor's Way—



a path to near-immortality open to those few dragons with the wherewithal to achieve it—Chardansearavitriol may indeed have undergone a transformation to a higher state.

In the decades that followed, the members of the Ebondeath Sect labored to prepare for the next stage of Chardansearavitriol's ascension, in accordance with a series of visions unveiled to the cult's highest-ranking priests by the Lord of Bones. In particular, the Dragon Cultists worked to create the *rings of Myrkul*, unholy items of great power that Myrkul indicated would be needed in the years to come. Despite the Ebondeath Sect's preparations for the long-anticipated reappearance of the Eye of Myrkul, however, the ancient Dragon Cult cell collapsed upon the death of Myrkul at the end of the Avatar Crisis and the subsequent sinking of the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath into the dark waters of the Mere of Dead Men. A number of fleeing Myrkulytes died before they escaped the swamp, giving up their lives—and their magical *rings of Myrkul*—to the monstrous denizens of the Mere.

Recent Events

While Myrkul is dead, his throne having been seized first by Cyric (Cyruk to most former Myrkulytes) and then Kelemvor, his essence and a measure of his power survives in an ancient artifact known as the *Crown of Horns*, currently worn by Nhyris D'Hothek, a pureblooded yuan-ti active in the subterranean city of Skullport deep beneath streets of Waterdeep. While it remains unclear whether Myrkul anticipated his own demise, the reoccurrence of the Eye of Myrkul a few short years after the god's death is extremely fortuitous in the fallen god's quest to regain some of the power he once commanded. Toward that end, events set in motion years ago are coming together as Myrkul's residual power waxes once again under the celestial phenomenon that bears his name.

At the time of his death, Myrkul's avatar exploded far out and high above the Sea of Swords. While much of his power rained down on the waters below and gradually collected on the sea floor deep beneath the surface, a small fraction of the god's power coalesced atop the sea's surface into a patch of floating bone dust and gradually drifted north atop the waves toward the Mere of Dead Men. After years of drifting, the bone dust reached the saltwater swamp, where it quickly diffused throughout the western reaches of the Mere.

As the manifestation of Myrkul's fading power drifted through the waters of the swamp, it animated a legion of undead from the countless fallen bodies that lay unburied beneath the waters. Although leaderless and undirected, this burgeoning army of undead has upset the balance of power in the region, leading indirectly to increased numbers of raids by displaced dwellers in the Mere directed against travelers along the High Road. In addition, many of the animated remains were those of the Myrkulytes who fled the temple's sinking in the Year of Shadows. As such, many of the *rings of Myrkul* they bore have made their way into the possession of a wide variety of evil, intelligent creatures, including Esau Enoch, Mak'kar, Varak Redshield, and Datou (villains who appeared in the first four adventures of the *Mere of Dead Men* series).

Of particular import to this adventure, two more *rings of Myrkul* made their way into the possession of Amalkyn the Black and Helduth Flamespell. These self-styled bandit lords, having recently established holds in the central hills of the Sword Mountains, forged ties to the Cult of the Dragon cell in Leilon. Intrigued by the unlikely coincidence of two such magical rings being found at opposite ends of the Mere, the leaders of the Dragon Cult cell in Leilon expended a great deal of effort discovering the scraps of lore associated with the rings.

During their investigation, the Cultists in Leilon discovered the journal of a former member of the Ebondeath Sect who had dwelt anonymously in Leilon for several years before his death. The man's writings indicated that a secret temple of Myrkul, with its roots in one of the earliest Dragon Cult cells active in the North, had stood somewhere in the heart of the Mere before sinking beneath the dark waters at the end of the Time of Troubles. The journal's allusions to a Sacred One known as the Ebondeath who resided within the lost temple indicated to the Cultists of Leilon that the legendary Chardansearavitriol might well have become a dracolich centuries ago. In the hope that the dracolich might be restored to its undead status, the leaders of the Cult cell in Leilon directed both Amalkyn and Helduth Flamespell to search for the legendary house of Myrkulyte worship. The Dragon Cult leaders induced an adult black dragon, whom they know as Voaraghamanthar, to assist in the search. The wyrm agreed to participate in exchange for a share of Chardansearavitriol's treasure plus the Twinned Crown of Yarlith, which was turned over to the dragon in advance. (This item is detailed in the "New Magical Items' sidebar.) The regalia of Yarlith had been recovered by Cult agents several years earlier from the long-lost ruins of the fallen realm's royal seat.

The hunt for Chardansearavitriol's cairn is complicated by the plottings of the Cult of the Dragon's draconic ally and another wyrm unknown to them. Unbeknownst to the Cult of the Dragon leaders in Leilon, Voaraghamanthar has an identical twin named Waervaerendor. The adult black wyrms have an unusually strong and loyal alliance, and they have long pretended to be a single being. This deception has provided them with a powerful advantage against foes who expect to face but a single dragon. The dragon twins have strived to increase their collective power and the strength of their empathic bond as well as achieve a measure of immortality. For both dragons, achieving immortality through undeath is a deluded pursuit not worthy of consideration. Nevertheless, Voaraghamanthar has forged an alliance with the local cell of the Dragon Cult in the hopes of discovering arcane lore that can further twins' true goals, pretending all the while to be tempted by the Dragon Cultists' entreaties.

As part of their personal investigations not revealed to the Cult, the draconic pair have discovered a collection of dark sermons attributed to Strongor Bonebag and, as a result, suspect that Chardansearavitriol may have undergone a process with significant differences from that employed to create most dracoliches. In addition, the twin dragons suspect that the other of the Twin Crowns of Myrmoran might still rest within the ancient Uthtower that the Ebondeath claimed as his lair. Hoping to wrest both legacies of Chardansearavitriol from the Cult's grasp without the Dragon Cultists suspecting they have been betrayed, Waervaerendor and Voaraghamanthar have concocted a plan by which a band of adventurers will do their "dirty work" for them. As his brother and the Dragon Cultists narrowed their search to a small region of the swamp, Waervaerendor attacked a recently established Helmite base in the ruins of Iniarv's Tower and killed or captured all of the followers of Helm who dwelt therein. The dragon is aware that the paladin commander of the Helmites, Sir Justin Melenikus, has dispatched several bands of adventurers into the Mere of Dead Men to end the recent attacks on travelers along the High Road. Waervaerendor simply awaits the return of one of those bands (or any suitable group that happens along and is capable of serving the dragon's desires). The wyrm intends

to offer the lives of the Helmites in exchange for retrieving the bones of Chardansearavitriol and the Twinned Crown of Uthtower (one of the Twin Crowns of Myrmoran, and the counterpart to the Twinned Crown of Yarlith already in the dragons twins' possession) before the Dragon Cultists can do the same.

Ruins of Iniarv's Tower

In the aftermath of the destruction of Uthtower, Iniarv retreated to his catacombs and spell libraries, where legend holds he continued his arcane studies until such time as he transformed himself into a demilich. The ruins of Iniarv's Tower have since been explored by many bands of brave adventurers, most of whom never returned from the catacombs of the undead archmage. In the Year of the Storms (1310 DR), the Company of the Howling Wolf emerged from the dungeons beneath the site claiming to have destroyed the demilich, an assertion that remains unproven. Even after the demilich's supposed destruction, efforts to rebuild the ruined tower have always ended in failure, which legend holds is due to the unseen hand of Iniarv.

The most recent effort to rebuild the crumbling stronghold by Sir Justin Melenikus and the watchers of Helm has come to naught as well. The day before the PCs arrive on the scene, Waervaerendor devastated the structure, tearing asunder great sections of the keep's walls. Those stone fortifications not reduced to rubble were instead scoured and pitted with the acid of his breath weapon.

As the PCs approach the ruins of Iniarv's Tower, the black dragon is perched atop the roof of the keep's main tower cloaked by his *ring of invisibility*. Waervaerendor observes the PCs while remaining invisible until such time as he is either discovered or he chooses to reveal himself (as discussed in the next section). The dragon normally employs his *ring of invisibility* to mask his location until he's had a chance to assess the strengths and composition of the approaching adventurers.

If the PCs have visited the ruins of Iniarv's Tower recently, they are probably familiar with the above-ground portions of the structure, and the DM should adjust descriptions accordingly.

What remains of Iniarv's Tower is perched atop a steep escarpment overlooking the High Road. Four stone walls shielded with parapets ring the central ward in a classic square shell keep design. A narrow path leads up from the road below to the fortress' gate and into a narrow tunnel through the center of the wide, squat western tower. Thirty-foot-high towers guard the northern and southern corners of the central ward as well. In the rear of the castle, the 70' high main tower looms over the bailey and fortifications below.

Large sections of the stone fortifications have disintegrated and been rebuilt many times over the years with varying degrees of artistic and practical skill. More alarming are the signs of a recent battle between the defenders and a great beast capable of ripping apart thick stone walls with its claws and scouring the stone with acid. The smoke of smoldering fires drifts lazily above the central courtyard, suggesting that Sir Justin Melenikus and the watchers of Helm did not prevail.

1. Walls. The oft-repaired, granite walls of Iniarv's Tower are 5 feet thick granite fortifications that have

Series Overview

Edging along the eastern edge of the Mere of Dead Men is the High Road, a vital and well-traveled route linking Waterdeep to the northern town of Leilon and, north of that, the city of Luskan. Over the last several months, the High Road between Waterdeep and Leilon has been threatened by monsters from the Mere. Caravans report brutal attacks by lizard men on catoblepas mounts, yuan-ti, gargantuan bullywugs, and will o' wisps. There have even been confirmed sightings of a huge black lizard skulking through the Mere. Sir Justin Melenikus, a Waterdhavian knight and paladin of Helm, has grown weary of these attacks and offered his services to the city. Sir Justin and his watchers (specialty priests of Helm) recently left Waterdeep and headed north, clearing bandits out of the ruins of the demilich Iniarv's tower (on the edge of the Mere) and turning the site into their encampment.

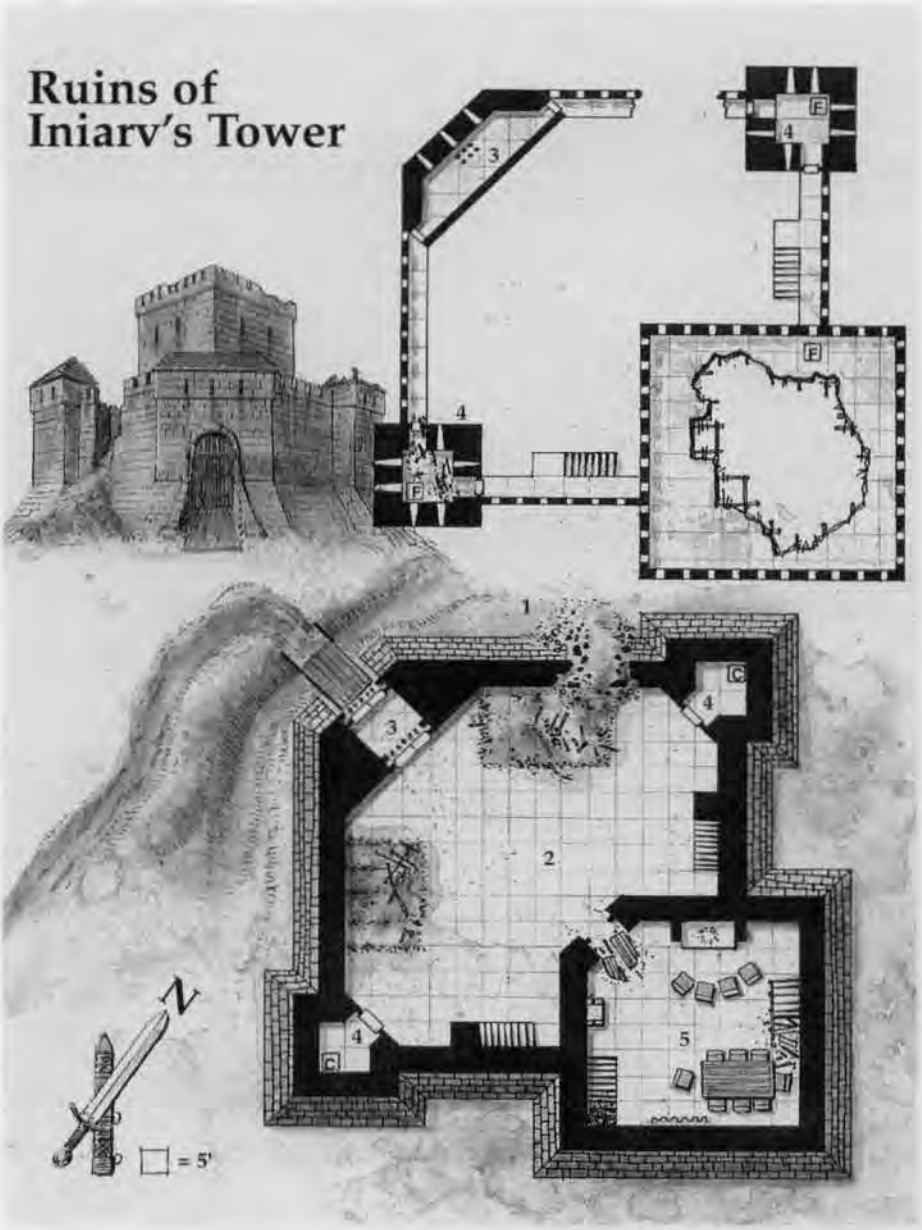
Melenikus and his watchers have garnered enthusiastic support from the Lords of Waterdeep, the city's Merchants' Guild, and the local Adventurers' Guild, In fact, a notice has been posted prominently in the Adventurers' Guildhall that reads:

"Sir Justin Melenikus, a renowned knight of Helm, needs adventurers to help slay monstrous threats from the dreaded Mere of Dead Men. Fell creatures have been attacking caravans on the High Road, slaughtering travelers, and endangering Waterdeep's trade with its northern neighbors. Unless the monsters are defeated, all trade to the north could be halted. Sir Justin and his watchers have made camp in the ruins of Iniarv's Tower, located four days' walk toward Leilon. Interested parties should meet with Sir Justin in person."

"Rewards for slain monsters will be authorized by Sir Justin. Gold will be paid by the Free Merchant's Guild upon presentation of a stamped writ form the knight himself."

A handful of adventurers have already left the city for Iniarv's Tower, a ruin located in the foothills east of the Mere. Sir Justin is sending several groups into the swamp to rout the monsters. This series explores several key sites where monsters are thought or known to dwell. Using divination spells, the watchers have determined that a great evil lurks in the Mere, and that the recent attacks on the High Road are somehow related.

Unlike the previous four adventures in this series, Sir Justin and the watchers of Helm are no longer in control of the ruins of Iniarv's Tower when the PCs arrive. After a great battle, the surviving followers of Helm were taken captive by the black wyrm Waervaerendor, who has temporarily taken up residence in the ruin. As such, Sir Justin is in no position to offer magical items to aid the PCs in their quest, nor can the heroes return to Iniarv's Tower during an adventure to receive curative magics, as was the case in the previous adventures.



been breached and crudely patched in many locations. Atop the walls, narrow walkways connect the second floors of the three lesser towers. Each walkway is guarded by a waist-high parapet and overhangs the central courtyard by two feet. Stone steps lead up to the walkway along the insides of the northeastern and southeastern walls.

Walking atop the walls encircling the central bailey is a treacherous practice. Over the years, the stone has slowly crumbled, transforming the walkways into unsteady surfaces of loose stone. The parapets are heavily damaged as well, providing only 25% partial cover to defenders. Anyone who attempts to run, fight, or otherwise move across the walkways or parapets at more than a crawl must make a successful Dexterity check every round. If the check fails, there is a 5% chance a character tumbles into the central ward to suffer 2d6 points of damage.

Waervaerendor's assault damaged the walls, and he created a large hole in the northwestern wall with a slap of his tail. Anyone attempting to navigate that particular breach must make a successful Dexterity check or tumble down the scarp, suffering 2d6+1 points of damage.

Only half the normal amount of structural damage is necessary to open a breach in any existing wall.

2. Ward. The courtyard consists of hard-packed earth with great clawed furrows gouged into the ground. In addition to the shattered masonry, scattered construction supplies, and dried patches of blood, the courtyard is littered with wreckage from the collapse of the wooden turret that until recently stood atop the main tower.

A small wooden building of recent construction lies in ruins along the northwestern wall of the keep. It served as a both a smithy and workshop, but the building was largely burnt in the recent battle.

A partially crushed wooden stable lines the southwestern wall of the keep. The front side of the flat-roofed structure opens into the ward, its overhanging roof supported by wooden posts. The northern end of the stable has collapsed, victim of the same blow from the dragon's tail that shattered the adjoining wall of the keep.

Although a significant amount of rubble is strewn across the central ward, passage across the bailey is still relatively unhindered. Searching the courtyard reveals obvious evidence that a great beast battled a company of armored warriors and priests, such as the occasional broken blade or fragment of mail, but the bodies of all of the fallen are missing. Both the heavily damaged stable and smoldering workshop provide 50% partial cover, but a single point of structural damage to each is sufficient to cause a complete collapse.

3. Gate Tower. Nearly 30 feet tall, the gatehouse consists of a narrow tunnel through the bottom half of the structure. It leads into the central courtyard, a second floor chamber connecting the northwestern and southwestern walkways, and a flat roof guarded by parapets. The gate tower's fortifications are largely intact and unbreached.

Defenders on the second floor can open and close the twin portcullises that bar passage through the tunnel

below, and half a dozen murder holes allow them to attack invaders who breach the lower gatehouse defenses.

The doors and inner portcullis in the lower tunnel are shattered and twisted, as Waervaerendor stood within the central ward and reached his claws down the tunnel to drag forth the follower of Helm who had taken refuge within. The upper chamber and roof are strewn with stone and wood rubble, including a pair of smashed ballistae atop the latter.

4. Lesser Towers. The small corner towers on the northern and southern ends of the keep stand 30 feet high. The northern structure is crowned with a parapet and pierced with a ring of arrowslits, while the roof of the southern tower has collapsed, leaving the second floor open to the sky. The lower floor of each tower is accessed from the central courtyard through heavily damaged wooden doors, while the upper floors sport twin doors in similar states of disrepair leading out onto the adjoining walkways. Wooden trapdoors connect the various levels of each tower.

Stored in each tower is a wooden skiff able to transport four humans and their equipment through the swamp.

5. Main Tower. The main tower, for which the ruins are named, looms over the rest of the keep. Standing over 70 feet tall with a slightly overhanging roof, the view from the tower's upper floors is a stunning vista that takes in much of the Mere of Dead Men, the High Road, and the Sword Mountains. In many places, the walls of the tower are heavily damaged.

The roof of the tower has largely collapsed, although parts of the roof remain around the edges of the tower. Aside from the roof, the only entrance into the main tower is a wide set of doors smashed by Waervaerendor as he attempted to reach those Helmites who had been driven back into the tower's confines during the fray. The dragon entered the tower from the hole in the roof above. The turret erected by the followers of Helm to shield the interior of the tower was futile, as the dragon simply tossed the wooden structure into the central ward below and then *spider climbed* down an interior wall of the tower. At one point the interior of the tower was divided into multiple levels by stout wooden floors, but they have long since rotted away. Now the stone floor of the tower lies open to the sky above. Broken rafters embedded in the walls of the tower extend into the room, providing convenient nesting places for birds, bats, and other small flying creatures. Although no such creatures currently reside among the rafters (a hint of the dragon's continued presence), evidence of their habitation can be found everywhere.

The ground floor of the tower served as Sir Justin's command post. Cooking was done in the great hearth on the northwestern wall of the tower, and strategy sessions were held on the large table placed in the eastern corner of the room near an oversized map of the Mere hung on the wall. Stone steps in the south corner of the room lead up to a landing and then turn to the northeast before ending abruptly where the second floor once stood. Other steps in the northern corner once led down to the cellar, but they have since been filled in with large amounts of stone by the followers of Helm. About one in ten rocks is enchanted with an *Iniarv's unseen voice* spell, recharged during the battle with Waervaerendor, when disturbed it says, "Cease ye who would invite Iniarv's wrath!"

The stairs leading down are filled with rocks of varying shapes and sizes, and the catacombs of Iniarv are beyond the scope of this adventure. If the PCs wish to explore the dungeon beneath the ruins at some future date, the DM may develop Iniarv's catacombs as he sees fit.

A spell unleashed in the battle between the dragon and the followers of Helm inadvertently recharged one additional casting of *Iniarv's unseen voice*. As such, the first living or undead creature who passes through the ground-level entrance to the main tower hears Iniarv's dry whisper of a voice over his or her right shoulder speak the words, "Tread lightly, for you trespass in the abode of Iniarv!"

Where Have the Helmites Gone?

The waters of the Mere immediately across the High Road from the ruins of Iniarv's Tower are particularly foul, corrupted by the power of the twin black dragons. The entire area is absent of any signs of animal life, and even the trees have begun rot. Anyone so foolish as to dive into the muddy waters with an open wound or consume even a small amount the brackish water suffers 1d6+2 points of damage.

Buried in the thick mud that covers the swamp's bottom, beneath six feet of water, are the bones of the long-fallen warriors of Phalorm. Interred among them are the bodies of the valiant Helmites who fell defending the keep against the black wyrm. While the freshly dead have been deliberately placed there and left to rot—for such is the favorite fare of black dragons—many of the Helmites still live, although they might wish otherwise given the horrifying conditions of their imprisonment. In turn, each survivor was bound, forced to ingest *air spores*, then interred beneath the muck. Waervaerendor expects that at least a handful of the captives will survive their nightmarish ordeal if indeed it becomes necessary to honor any bargain he strikes with the PCs.

Before the dragon attacked, the company that garrisoned the ruins included 12 watchers of Helm—two 11th-level Priests, three 9th-level Priests, three 7th-level Priests, and four 5th-level Priests—and a dozen 4th-level Fighters, in addition to Sir Justin. Fully half the Priests fell in the battle, as well as a third of the Warriors. When the adventure begins, the survivors remain alive beneath the muddy bottom of the Mere, stripped of all their magic, armor, and arms. Although *air spores* typically grant only 2d4 days of air, Waervaerendor intends to keep the followers of Helm alive as a bargaining chip, so he must periodically renew the magic that keeps the humans alive.

In the unlikely event that the PCs attempt to search the dark waters near the tower before delving into the swamp, Waervaerendor swoops down to distract them, admonishing them to head for the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath immediately or face his wrath. If the PCs undertake such a search before exploring Iniarv's Tower, the black wyrm swoops down to confront them on the High Road immediately. Later, once the overly

Wyrms of the Mere

Voaraghamanthar and **Waervaerendor** (adult male black dragons): INT average (10); AL CE; AC –2; MV 12, fly 30 (C), swim 12; HD 14; hp 77 each; THAC0 7; #AT 3 + special; Dmg 1d6+6 (claw), 1d6+6 (claw), 3d6+6 (bite); SA breath weapon, dragon fear, magical items, spell use; SD spell immunities (see below), magical items; MR 15%; SZ G (48' body, 40' tail); ML 16; XP 13,000; *MM*/65.

Notes: Both dragons employ all the standard draconic attack forms, including claws, bite, breath weapon, snatch, plummet, kick, wing buffet, tail slap, stall, and spells. They prefer not to enter into combat unless they can first study the tactics of their foe or foes.

Voaraghamanthar's preferred strategy is to cast *shield* before commencing battle and *taunt* when drawing forth a foe from a defensive fortification. When battling in outdoor settings, Voaraghamanthar is quick to employ *enlarge* to amplify his threatening appearance and the effectiveness of his physical attacks. He resorts to *reduce* only when he must enter a structure or cavern complex not large enough to accommodate his bulk, a tactic of last resort given its reduction of his combat effectiveness.

Waervaerendor's preferred strategy is to cast *acidosis* before entering battle. He prefers aquatic combat to other settings and is well versed in employing his wings and body to drown a foe. He is also comfortable when perched on a stone structure or rocky outcropping strong enough to bear his weight, but close enough to allow him to engage opponents with his claws, tail, and breath weapons. (In such situations he employs *spider climb* whenever convenient.) Waervaerendor is less versed in aerial and dry land combat and avoids engagements on those types of terrain if at all possible.

In shallow water, the wyrms employ wing buffets to drive huge sprays of water at group of opponents. When done on a body of water they have previously corrupted, this tactic is extremely effective in inducing nausea in living opponents who cannot avoid ingesting some of the water.

Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor immediately flee if brought to less than half of their total hit points. If one is close enough to come to the other's defense, the one dragon endeavors to position his opponents so they are particularly susceptible to his twin's breath weapon. The dragons speak the tongue of black dragons and the tongue common to all evil dragons. They also have the ability to communicate with any intelligent creature.

By working together but maintaining a single "public" identity, Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor have acquired the reputation of a single wyrm who can be in two places at once and who can disappear while heading in one direction and reappear moments later from another. While their empathic bond does not allow them unfettered mental communication except when in sight of each other, it does enable them to sense the emotional state of their kin at any time. Both wyrms have acquired a small measure of control over their emotional states sufficient to convey very simple prearranged messages.

The brothers' breath weapon inflicts 14d4+7 points of damage and can be used once every three rounds. Creatures caught by the stream can save vs. breath weapon for half damage from the acid.

Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor cast spells and use magical abilities at 11th level. Like all dragons, they cannot attack, use their breath weapon, use their magical abilities, or fly (except to glide) while casting a spell. The wyrms cast all spells with a casting time of 1. They have the following additional powers: *darkness* in a 60' radius 3/day and *corrupt water* 1/day. (*Corrupt water* stagnates 60 cubic feet of water, making it become still, foul, inert, and unable to support animal life.)

Black dragons are born with an innate *water breathing* ability and an immunity to acid. Both dragons save as a 14th-level Fighter. Both dragons can inspire panic or fear. Consult the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ tome, page 64, for details.

Voaraghamanthar's Spells: *enlarge* or *reduce* (×2), *shield* (×2), *taunt* (×2).

Voaraghamanthar's Items: On the rightmost talon of his left rear claw, he wears a *ring of wizardry* that doubles 1st-level Wizard spells. On the leftmost talon of his right rear claw, he wears a *ring of fire resistance*. On the rightmost talon of his left rear claw, he wears the Twinned Crown of Yarlith (see "New Magical Items" sidebar).

Waervaerendor's Spells: *acidosis**, *sleep*, *spider climb*. (The *acidosis* spell is described in the "New Spells" sidebar.)

Waervaerendor's Items: On the rightmost talon of his left rear claw, he wears a *ring of invisibility*. On the leftmost talon of his right rear claw, he wears a *ring of mind shielding*. In a small pouch strapped to his rear left leg, he carries six doses of *air spores* (detailed in the *Tome of Magic*) and a folded *portable hole*. The dragon uses the *portable hole* to ferry both treasure and prisoners. Currently Sir Justin Melenikus is imprisoned within the *portable hole*, breathing by means of a colony of *air spores* Waervaerendor forced him to ingest.

Personality: Like most black dragons, Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor are quick to anger and resent intrusions into their affairs or their domain. They are cunning and amoral, but never needlessly cruel or destructive. They have little interest in base displays of power or in the acquisition of territory, holding discretion to be the better part of valor and their own lives to be more important than any short-term victory. The dragons are skilled actors, willing and able to adopt any persona that advances their long-term aims. Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor can read and reason as intelligently, patiently, and humbly as a timid human scholar, and they thirst for knowledge in any form, particularly if it relates to the Art. They seek to ensure their long-term survival through the acquisition of magical items and a ceaseless pursuit of immortality, yet (privately) disdain the thought of undeath.

If any difference were to be noted, it would be that Waervaerendor is somewhat more outgoing, preferring to acquire information from others face-to-face, whereas Voaraghamanthar would rather acquire lore from dusty tomes and ancient ruins. Waervaerendor also relishes the hunt more than his twin and is apt to tackle difficult quarry just for the challenge of it.

History: Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor were born in a large clutch of black dragons far to the south. Draconic twins hatched from the same egg are incredibly rare, for typically they kill each other before hatching, but these dragons share an empathic link that bonds them together as an unshakable team. Allied together, the twins slew the rest of their siblings within days of their hatching and fled before their parents could destroy them in turn.

After many years of lurking among the swamps and moors of Faerûn, Weszlum and Welzour, as they are known to each other, adopted the Mere of Dead Men as their personal demesne. The twins were attracted both by the isolated setting, far from the traditional haunts of most black dragons and thus reducing the risk of challengers, as well as the legendary horde of Chardansearavitriol, the lost treasury of the flooded realm of Uthtower, and the treasures lost with the destruction of the Fallen Kingdom's army. Of particular interest, their studies had indicated that the Twin Crowns of Myrmoran, two of the many lost treasures of the Twilit Land, were reputed to have enhanced the empathic bond between the fraternal monarchs of Uthtower and Yarlith and thus might serve the brother wyrms in a similar fashion. The draconic twin's alliance with the Cult of the Dragon cell in Leilon is relatively recent and insincere. The twin wyrms seek the missing Twinned Crown of Uthtower and wish to increase their understanding of Sammaster's teachings to aid their quest for immortality.

perspicacious adventurers have left the immediate area, the dragon then ferries both the bodies and his prisoners deep into the Mere, far from the prying eyes of the PCs.

Sir Justin Melenikus is not with the priests of Helm below the swamp. Waervaerendor has fed Sir Justin *air spores* and stuffed the paladin into a *portable hole* that the dragon keeps folded and stashed in a large pouch strapped to his rear left leg. This is the wyrm's added insurance policy and warns against PCs using area effect spells in the dragon's vicinity.

Dance With the Dragon

Once he has had the opportunity to assess the PCs, Waervaerendor confronts them. The dragon, who does not divulge his name, has a flair for cruel dramatics, and he reveals himself in a fashion that terrifies while improving his negotiating advantage. One possible tactic he might employ, assuming the PCs have already triggered the *Iniarv's unseen voice* spell in area **5**, is to stand directly behind and above one of the PCs and softly ask in a crude parody of the lich's voice, "Now where did I hide that dragon?"

Alternatively, the black wyrm might begin to circle the PCs as they stand in the central bailey, creating footprints that appear as if out of thin air. As with all black dragons, Waervaerendor's putrid breath is so revolting that if directly inhaled by another being it induces nausea in even the strongest stomach. If the PCs enter an enclosed area, such as one of the lesser towers, the black wyrm might sneak up behind them and expel a great gust of foul-smelling air into the chamber they have just entered.

In any event, once he has made his presence known to the PCs, Waervaerendor negotiates a deal. Depending on their reaction, the dragon might choose to make himself visible. Although he keeps a tight reign on his temper, Waervaerendor can fake a wide variety of emotional reactions and does so if it enhances his negotiating position.

Waervaerendor's primary objectives is to induce the PCs to travel to the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath and retrieve both the bones of the great black wyrm Chardansearavitriol as well as what remains of his hoard. Waervaerendor is alert for treachery, fully expecting the PCs to react as he would in a similar situation. The dragon offers the lives of Sir Justin Melenikus and the watchers of Helm in exchange for the PCs' services. The dragon does not explain why he wants the above-named items recovered, nor does he explain why he has chosen the PCs to recover the legacy of Chardansearavitriol for him. If the PCs press for guarantees that Sir Justin Melenikus and the watchers of Helm are released once the mission is accomplished, Waervaerendor gives his word and acts insulted if the PCs do not consider this sufficient.

The black wyrm is malicious, conniving, and unscrupulous. He employs any tactic that gives him an advantage. At most, and only after lengthy negotiations, the dragon grants the following concessions: the PCs may keep almost all the treasure they recover, and Waervaerendor swears not to attack the PCs once the transaction is concluded. In addition to the bones of Chardansearavitriol, Waervaerendor demands his choice of any three items from the recovered treasure, an oath to their gods that the PCs will not communicate with or otherwise seek assistance from any likely ally prior to the completion of the agreement, a similar oath on behalf of Sir Justin and the watchers of Helm that the church of Helm will not hold the dragon accountable for their imprisonment, a promise that the PCs will inform the Helmites of the strictures of their release immediately, and the condition that they pursue their mission without delay of any sort. For practical reasons, Waervaerendor intends to honor the letter of any agreement reached, but the dragon exploits any loophole available if necessary.

If for any reason a deal cannot be reached, Waervaerendor is not averse to defending himself with unchecked fury. However, during the course of such a fray, the dragon attempts to rekindle negotiations after demonstrating the PCs' folly. If the PCs profess disinterest in the deal but do not attack, the dragon audibly observes that those who do not serve him are simply prey and then prepares to treat them as such, although he is still willing to restart negotiations.

Once negotiations are completed, the black wyrm addresses the most obvious question—how to find the lost temple of Myrkul. If the PCs entrusted with the Helmites any of the *rings of Myrkul* they recovered in earlier adventures, the dragon returns the unholy jewelry (four rings total) he seized during the assault on Iniarv's Tower. In any event, Waervaerendor explains that the *rings of Myrkul* empower their bearers to sense the general location of the sunken Uthtower and Mausoleum of the Ebondeath, and that the accuracy of that intuition increases as the power of the fallen Lord of Bones waxes (that is, as the appearance of the Eye of Myrkul draws near).

If the PCs have not yet learned of the imminent astronomical phenomenon, Waervaerendor explains that it has long been associated with Myrkul's influence and that its appearance is imminent—the first such occurrence since the Time of Troubles. The PCs are directed to cross the Mere, employing the power of the *rings of Myrkul* to navigate. The dragon notes that if the PCs proceed with all due haste, they should arrive just in time to enter the temple beneath the baleful Eye of Myrkul. Waervaerendor hints that gaining entrance to the temple of Myrkul is somehow contingent on both possessing one or more *rings of Myrkul* as well as the occurrence of the celestial phenomenon, a fact gleaned from his scholarly investigations. The dragon is unaware that the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath has sunk beneath the waters of the Mere or that it resurfaces from the first appearance of the Eye of Myrkul in the night sky until the first rays of dawn strike the turret of the ancient Uthtower.

Into the Mere

Travelers in the Mere of Dead Men find the saltwater swamp to be a slow and treacherous passage. In many places, the dark waters are deep enough to permit a flat-bottomed skiff to pass, but in other locations small islands rise from brackish pools and are overrun with riotous, twisted vegetation. The ancient remains of long-fallen humans, demihumans,

and orcs are scattered everywhere, as are the bones of many less identifiable creatures.

The Uthtower is nearly 70 miles west of Iniarv's Tower, and travelers who do not employ some sort of water vessel take weeks to make the overland trek. (Beings with movement rates of 12 can cover approximately two miles a day through the swamp.) Skiffs have a movement rate of 6 and can travel approximately 12 miles per day on open water, as discussed in *Of Ships and the Sea*. Given the thick vegetation, skiff-borne travelers through the Mere are reduced to a base movement rate of 4 and can cover approximately eight miles per day, assuming ten hours of travel. Thus, the journey to the temple of Myrkul from the ruins of Iniarv's Tower takes roughly 8–9 days if the PCs employ skiffs or the like. (PCs can use the skiffs found in area 4 of Iniarv's Tower or build their own.) An average-sized group of PCs requires two skiffs, for each small vessel can hold at most four individuals and 500 lbs. of equipment.

Wilderness Encounters

Encounters within the Mere are frequent and often deadly. The DM should check for a random encounter six times per day, with a 4-in-10 chance of an encounter occurring per check.

While among the waters of the Mere of Dead Men, the PCs should have one or both of the following encounters, either on their way to the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath or during their return to the ruins of Iniarv's Tower.

The DM should feel free to add any additional random encounters appropriate for a relatively cold, saltwater swamp set in the northern Realms. In particular, many monsters unique to the marshes and swamps of the Realms make their homes in the Mere, including aballins, alguduirs (swamp dragons), flying fangs (flying snakes), gulguthydrae, meazels, nyths, sewerms, skuz, slithermorphs, swamp rohches, thessalhydrae, and xantravars (stinging horrors). Also, many of the more commonly known denizens of cold marshes and swamps are found within the Mere, including behirs, bullywugs, giant leeches, giant lizards, hydrae, lizard men, muckdwellers, scrags, shambling mounds, snakes, toads, and will o' wisps.

Finally, Myrkul's "taint" has animated many of the dead that lie beneath the cold waters of the Mere, and encounters with undead of all sorts—particularly ghouls, skeletons, and zombies—are common in the western reaches of the Mere.

1. Myrkul's Night Riders. As the PCs are making their way through the swamp, they enter an area where the water is rarely more than six inches deep, forcing them to get out of their skiffs and drag them along, but where the soft ground beneath the water causes the PCs to sink up to a foot deep into the slimy muck. After 30 minutes of torturous progress through the shallow waters (movement is reduced to one-third normal), the ground beneath the PCs' feet begins to firm up, and a low, fog-shrouded hillock with a few trees can be seen up ahead.

As the PCs reach the edge of the island, from out of the gloom charges a company of utterly silent, armored warriors on horseback. The dark knights bear down on the PCs. Both the horsemen and their steeds are little more than skeletal corpses with tatters of withered flesh still attached who move as swiftly and surely as living beings.

The undead warriors of Myrkul's cavalry are clad only in scraps of rusted mail, and the deadmounts, as gaunts are often known, each wear small pieces of barding. Each rider bears a medium lance of recent construction. Two of the night riders wield rusted longswords, one night rider wields a dwarven broadsword that never rusts, one night rider wields a blackened silver scimitar, one night rider wields a *chill blade dagger* (see *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™* tome, page 359), and one night rider wields a *scythe of wounding +1* (treat as a *sword of wounding* with a base damage of 2d6+1 hp against creatures of all sizes). Both magical weapons are inscribed with the skull symbol of Myrkul and radiate a faint aura of evil.

The night riders and their steeds fight fiercely until destroyed, with the partially skeletal warriors remaining astride their mounts for as long as possible. They do not, however, attack any PC wearing a *ring of Myrkul* unless attacked by the PC first. The night riders are well aware of the terrain surrounding the hillock and do not allow ringless PCs to leave the muck or otherwise make their way to the top of the low rise. If the PCs retreat away from the hill or attempt to circumnavigate it, the night riders dismount and pursue, with the gaunts following as close as they can along the water's edge without actually entering the stagnant swamp waters. Neither the night riders nor the gaunts can be turned within 50 feet of the hilltop—a radius that reaches a good 10 feet into the Mere. If successfully turned while outside the radius of Myrkul's power, the undead warriors and horses retreat back to the hill they are commanded to guard.

A small cairn is located atop the hillock. Atop the pile of stones is a rock carved and chalked with a white human skull. If a living creature disturbs the barrow in any fashion without speaking the name "Chardansearavitriol," a *glyph of warding* unleashes the effects of a *cause disease* spell. Beneath the pile of stones is the skeleton of a human male clad in a rotted black robe with a hooded cloak and bound about the waist with a single sash of bone-white hue. The corpse's feet and face are bare. A small, black lizard's skull is clutched in the skeleton's right hand (a typical holy symbol employed by priests of the Ebondeath Sect). A gold band painted black and adorned with a white skull—another *ring of Myrkul*—is worn on the corpse's left hand. A successful Religion nonweapon proficiency check reveals the that the cairn belongs to a Priest of Myrkul who was interred before or at the time of the death of the Lord of Bones during the Time of Troubles. Shortly before his death, the Priest animated the night riders (who were 4th-level Fighters in Phalorm's armies centuries ago) and gaunts (formerly medium warhorses) from among the many bodies sunk beneath the Mere, commanding them to inter him within the barrow and then guard his grave for all eternity.

Night riders (6): INT low (7); AL LE; AC 7; MV 10; HD 4; hp 30, 26, 22, 21, 17, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg

The ghostly remnants of an ancient army crest a fog-shrouded hillock.

1d8 or by weapon type; SA *chill touch*; SD *protection from good, darkness*; MR special (see below); SZ M; ML 13; XP 650; *FRE3*.

SA—The touch of a night rider chills nonundead for 1d4 points of damage and causes a cumulative hour-long 1-point Strength loss.

SD—Night riders can create *darkness 15' radius* or *protection from good 10' radius* at will. They are turned as shadows. Night riders are –1 to hit with missile weapons because of their clumsiness, and they suffer a –1 penalty to initiative rolls. They suffer only half damage from edged or piercing weapons, and they are unaffected by *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based magic. They cannot use spells, potions, or magical items requiring a living touch. Healing spells and potions cause a loss of hit points equal to the points of healing the magic would have given to a living being. (A partial or splash hit from a healing potion causes 1d2 points of damage.) Holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage per vial.

Gaunts (6): Int animal (1); AL LE; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2+2; hp 17, 15, 15, 12, 11, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (hooves); SA chilling breath; SD paralyzing ride; MR special (see below); SZ L; ML 12; XP 975; *FRE3*.

SA—The breath of a gaunt has a chilling effect. Living creatures within 10 feet must make a Constitution check every round they are exposed. Failure indicates 1d4 points of damage plus a cumulative one-point Strength loss lasting one hour.

SD—They are turned as ghouls. Any living being mounting a gaunt must save vs. paralyzation every round or be paralyzed. Such paralysis can only be broken by a successful saving throw. On the first round, the save is made at –6; on the second round, at –5; and so on. On each round of paralysis, a rider suffers an automatic 2 points of chill damage. Anyone who can reach a paralyzed rider can readily pull him or her off.

Gaunts suffer only half damage from edged or piercing weapons, and they are unaffected by *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based magic. Holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage per vial.

2. Wreck of the *Seawyrm*. The *Seawyrm* is a Luskanite long ship that foundered off the coast of the Mere of Dead Men several decades past on its way to the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath. In the years since the ship's sinking, currents and subsequent storms have driven the wreck deep into the Mere to its current location, where it rests some ten feet below the surface. The ship's entire crew drowned when the ship sank, and they were subsequently animated as sea zombies by the fell power of Myrkul in the years prior to the Time of Troubles. (The fact that the ship's captain was a priest of the Lord of Bones no doubt attracted the god's attention.) The sea zombies continue to dwell in the waters of the Mere amid the wreckage of their long ship, attacking all who disturb their watery grave save those wearing the *rings of Myrkul*.

The PCs first catch sight of the wreck when they realize that the small island up ahead is actually the overgrown remains of a seagoing vessel. Moments later, members of the ship's undead crew surface and attack the PCs and their skiffs from all sides, first with two rounds of hurled *bone bite* jaws (see below), then with rusted or rotten shortswords, daggers, hooks, clubs, and belaying pins.

The sea zombies are dressed in the rotted garb of Northmen raiders, and they look like human corpses that have been underwater for some time: bloated and discolored flesh dripping with foul water, with empty eye sockets, and tongues protruding between blackened lips.

The sea zombie with 36 hp is actually the animated corpse of the ship's captain, formerly a 4th-level Priest of Myrkul. His current roster of spells includes *darkness* (reverse of *light*), *curse* (reverse of *bless*), *putrefy food & drink* (reverse of *purify food & drink*), *chant*, and *silence 15' radius*. He first casts *putrefy food & drink* to destroy any holy water or supplies, then *silence 15' radius* on one of the skiffs, followed by *curse* and then *chant*. If a foe is pitched into the Mere, the Priest casts *darkness* (breaking off his *chant*, if necessary) so as to hinder any rescue efforts. In addition, the undead Myrkulyte Priest has prepared eight *bone bite* spells (as the 2nd-level spell detailed in *Faiths & Avatars*, page 127). Each zombie clutches a pair of bone jaws created by means of this spell. The *bone bite* jaws must be thrown (use the zombies' THAC0) and bite once for 1d6+4 points of damage and remain attached, bony fangs clinging, as they transform into a second, arching pair of jaws on the next round that automatically strike for an additional 1d4+2 points of damage. *Bone bite* teeth can puncture armor, carapaces, bony plates, dragon hide, and all known nonmagical barriers and substances. Undead creatures are unaffected by this spell, and *bone bite* jaws do not bite them.

The zombies are not the only threat posed in this encounter. An opportunistic meazel lurks among the overhanging branches of the surrounding trees, seeking a likely victim during the confusion of the sea zombies' attack. After selecting a target who is otherwise distracted and whose throat is not protected by any type of armor, the meazel attempts to drop down on its intended victim's shoulders and strangle him with a short leather cord. If it succeeds in killing its target, the meazel attempts to flee with its newly acquired food. The meazel defends itself, fleeing in the face of overwhelming odds. Note that the sea zombies attack the meazel as readily as the PCs if the opportunity presents itself.

The wreck of the *Seawyrm* lost much of its cargo long ago. Nonetheless, a few tantalizing treasures remain amid the muck along the ship's rotten keel. Scattered across the bottom of the hull are twelve gold doubloons from ancient Illusk (the human fortress that fell to an orc horde over a century ago and is now the site of the city of Luskan). Twice the size of a normal gold piece, each ancient coin is worth as much as 5 gp to a numismatist. A battered, moss-covered shield affixed to the long ship's gunwale still bears the heraldic device of a white human skull, face-on and upside down, encircled by the sinuous form of a skeletal wyrm. Finally, a small piece—approximately a cubic foot—of the shell of a golden ammonite covered with weeds and muck lies beneath the ship, directly beneath the hole in the rotted hulk through which it fell. The shell and rare mollusk's meat were intended to be given in tribute to Chardansearavitriol; as the *Seawyrm* foundered, however, its crew attempted to break off small pieces before diving overboard. This sole remaining piece, worth at least 1,000 gp, was broken off from the rest of the shell, but its would-be owner drowned before he could escape the sinking ship.

Sea zombies (8): INT low (5); AL CE; AC 7; MV 6, swim 12; HD 5; hp 36, 34, 30, 29, 25, 22, 19, 18; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA stench, disease, spell use; SD fire causes only half damage; immune to *sleep, charm,* illusions, and other mind-affecting attacks; cannot be turned; SZ M; ML 19; XP 420; *MM*/373.

Meazel: INT low (7); AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 4; hp 21; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SA strangle; SD thieving abilities; SZ M (5' tall); ML 11; XP 120; *MC Annual 3*/80.

Thieving abilities—PP 45%, OL 37; FRT 35%; MS 33%; HS 25%; DN 15%; CW 88%, RL 20%.

Lair of the Darktentacles

The Uthtower and the small coastal village it overlooked were established on the shore of a small bay protected from the sea by a natural breakwater. When the floodwaters receded in the aftermath of the Curse of Iniarv, the port settlement was buried beneath an avalanche of mud that filled the harbor with silt and left only the lonely spire of the Uthtower above the waterline. In the years since the creation of the Mere, the swamp has continued to creep into the sea, fed by runoff from the Sword Mountains to the east. By the Year of Shadows (1358 DR), the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath, as the Uthtower had been reborn, stood a full half-mile from the western edge of the Mere. As one of his last acts as a god, Myrkul caused his secret temple in the Mere to sink beneath the dark waters, creating a stagnant, brackish water-filled bowl some 100 yards across and 30 feet deep at its center where the Uthtower had once stood atop a rocky pinnacle.

In the years since the Time of Troubles, the site of the sunken temple has been home to a darktentacles, a many-tentacled, solitary predator with a black, glistening body. The monster initially selected the site of its lair for its advantageous terrain, but the lingering power of the Lord of Bones has bound the darktentacles to the locale as an unwilling guardian. The darktentacles is unaware of what force binds it to the site of its lair, nor is it aware of the significance of the site. Most adult darktentacles reproduce by budding once every two years after traveling far from their lairs to ensure no unwanted competition from their offspring. As this darktentacles has been unable to journey more than a half-mile afar and hence has been unwilling to bud, it has continued to grow in size until reaching its current gargantuan proportions.

When the PCs reach the watery basin that their *rings of Myrkul* indicate is the site of the temple, they may explore the site or await the appearance of the Eye of Myrkul (which happens that very night). In

any case, once they approach within a half-mile of the sunken temple of Myrkul, they have entered the darktentacles' watery domain.

The darktentacles is served by six *charmed* sewerms, a relatively large and dangerous breed of water snake found in the fetid waters of the swamps of the northern Sword Coast. The enslaved sewerms, selected for their size, patrol their master's territory in an endless search of prey, with a 1% cumulative chance per turn of discovering the PCs while they remain in the area. The darktentacles quickly learns of the presence of a band of intruders such as the PCs when it receives a mental communication from one of its charmed servitors, whom it then directs to attack if the snake can do so undetected.

The darktentacles prefers to attack prey that wanders into its lair, but the monster ventures forth if its foes seem unlikely to come to it. In either case, the creature attempts to swim beneath its intended targets before rising to the surface, its tentacles curling inward from all sides. The darktentacles seeks to drown or disable its foes as quickly as possible, coordinating attacks with the charmed sewerms (whose lives it sacrifices without hesitation). The darktentacles reserves its *sphere of force* ability to cover its escape if brought below one-third of its base hit points or if more than 20 tentacles are destroyed.

Scattered across the bottom of the darktentacles' bowl-shaped lair are hundreds of rusted swords, maces, flails, and other melee weapons that the monster has gathered from the bodies of fallen interlopers. Most are in poor condition, breaking 25% of the time when they strike. In combat, the darktentacles initially wields melee weapons in 18 of its tentacles, but that number may fluctuate wildly as weapons are dropped and others are picked up during the course of battle.

Most of the weapons employed by the darktentacles are ordinary, rusted weapons. However, two weapons wielded by the darktentacles are unique magical items. *Scalesbane* is a *longsword +1, +4 vs. reptiles*, borne into the Mere decades ago by a well-prepared but unlucky Waterdhavian warrior named Forstag Brokengulf, grand-uncle of the current family patriarch. The blade's origin is identifiable by anyone who has studied Waterdhavian heraldry. *Bloodflow* is a *broadsword +2, +3 vs. humans and demihumans*, lost on the battlefields of Uthtower by an orc chieftain of the Horde of the Wastes hours before Iniarv called forth the waters that flooded the land. In the hands of an orc or half-orc (including ogrillons and orogs), this blade assumes a blood-red hue and seeps a steady stream of the red liquid from its tip. The darktentacles has no other treasure, aside from the crumbling arms and armor and occasional coin buried beneath the silt of its lair.

If defeated but not slain, the darktentacles does not flee, nor does it initiate another attack unless its foes are significantly weakened by other events. If the darktentacles is slain but not destroyed, there is a 5% chance that its form is animated as a monster zombie by the dust of Myrkul's last avatar that still drifts about the Mere. In the unlikely event the darktentacles is transformed into an undead form, it retains all of the physical attacks but none of the magical attacks (*charm monster, hold monster,* or *sphere of force*) or magic resistance that the living monster possesses. The darktentacles zombie has 10 HD, 68 hp, is nonintelligent and neutrally aligned, but otherwise its statistics are unchanged. There is also a 5% chance that slain PCs are affected in the same way, rising from death as zombies to fight their former comrades.

While most darktentacles have the bulk of an adult cow, this one is truly gargantuan, at least thrice the average mass and capable of stretching to cover an area 30 feet in diameter. Sixty-two tentacles adorn the central bulk, forty-five of which are full-grown and stretch up to 25 feet. Each tentacle is studded with many small, shielded eyes that see as humans do but also have 140' infravision that operates underwater at a range of 70 feet. The creature also senses vibrations, smells substances in water, and discerns color and light differences through nodes all over its body.

Darktentacles: INT high (14); AL CE; AC 3; MV 1; HD 12; hp 84 (body), 20 per tentacle; THAC0 9; #AT 45 (up to 5 attacks per opponent); Dmg 1d6 (constrict), 1d2 (slap), or by weapon type; SA *charm* or *hold monster* spells; SD *sphere of force* spell; MR 60%; SZ G (30' across); ML 13; XP 17,000; *MC Annual 2*/33 (variant).

The DM should review the description of the darktentacles in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual, Volume Two* before running this encounter.

Any single attack dealing a tentacle 7 or more points of damage in a round, or cumulative damage amounting to 14 or more points, causes a tentacle to let go of whatever it holds and writhe about harmlessly for the next round before attacking again. Attacks totalling 20 points of damage sever a tentacle. Damage inflicted on tentacles does not count against the base hit points of the monster.

Sewerms (6): INT animal (1); AL N; AC 5; MV 12, swim 9; HD 4; hp 30, 27, 25, 17, 15, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA drain blood; SD surprise, anesthetic slime; SZ M (6' long); ML 6 (15 while *charmed*); XP 270; *MC Annual 4*.

Rise of the Uthtower

On the first night after the PCs arrive at the site of the sunken temple of Myrkul, the astronomical phenomenon known as the Eye of Myrkul finally makes its appearance in the heavens. As the new moon slowly passes within the Seven Stars of Mystryl, across the Realms, in places of power sacred to the Lord of Bones, Myrkul's power stages a brief renaissance. To observers in such sites of unholy power, the baleful Eye of Myrkul appears to hover unchanging until the rays of dawn once again stab across the sky, although in truth the Eye of Myrkul vanishes as quickly as it forms. (The exact date and time of the appearance of this astronomical phenomenon, as well as the timing of the subsequent dawn, is left for the DM to decide. It should be noted that the first rays of morning light appear in the Mere much later than might be expected thanks to the looming presence of the Sword Mountains to the east.)

On the night of the Eye of Myrkul, if three or more *rings of Myrkul* are brought within five miles of Myrkul's sunken temple, the Uthtower slowly emerges from the morass. Given the timing of the PCs' arrival and their

presumed possession of several *rings of Myrkul*, they are, in effect, responsible for the temple's ascension. Even if the PCs possess but one *ring of Myrkul*, the Uthtower still rises up from the bowels of the Mere. Unknown to the PCs, two other bearers of *rings of Myrkul*—Amalkyn the Black and Helduth Flamespell—are also close enough to trigger the temple's emergence, as discussed below.

The Uthtower takes approximately five rounds to emerge from the Mere. During the course of the ruin's ascension, great quantities of water and muck gush forth from the long-submerged tower. While much of the fine stonework crumbles beneath the ensuing deluge, the algae-coated walls of the towering edifice stand unbowed by the water's sudden pressure, and the Uthtower looms over the surrounding expanse once again, dripping water and silt from the long-buried bed of the Mere. Foolhardy PCs may attempt to enter one of the upper floors during the tower's ascension, but they are driven back by the torrent of brackish water.

An unexpected byproduct of the rise of the Uthtower is the release of a horde of mudmen formed since the Time of Troubles from the run-off of powerful enchantments that held the ruined temple deep beneath the Mere. The mudmen require 1d4 turns to reform following the chaos of their release, but thereafter they defend the waters surrounding the Uthtower, although they do not reenter the structure once the Uthtower sinks back into the Mere at dawn. (If the darktentacles survives, it abandons its domain to the mudmen but continues to hunt along the periphery.)

When a creature enters a pool inhabited by mudmen, they sense the intrusion immediately and take a single round to draw their substance together and rise to the surface, ready to attack on the following round. Mudmen do not pursue opponents who flee, as their senses do not extend beyond the pool. Instead, they sink into the depths, return to their dormant state, and wait until the next time someone enters their pool. They cannot communicate.

Mudmen (23): INT non (0); AL N; AC 10; MV 3; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA mud-throwing, suffocation; SD immunity to weapons (in dormant state only); immune to poison and mind-affecting spells; SZ S (4' high); ML special; XP 175; *MM*/260.

Followers of the Scaly Way

A group of Dragon Cultists led by Amalkyn and Helduth Flamespell are approximately two hours behind the PCs. (They would have been much nearer were it not for the subtle delaying tactics of Voaraghamanthar, their black dragon ally.) Once the Uthtower rises up once again, the Followers of the Scaly Way rush to the ruin to begin their own exploration.

Any interaction between the PCs and the Cult's forces is dictated in large part by the actions of the PCs prior to the arrival of their heretofore unknown rivals. If the PCs have not yet entered the tower when the Cultists arrive, a confrontation might unfold immediately. If the PCs have hidden themselves well, their opponents might precede them into the ruin. If the PCs enter the tower before the arrival of the Cultists but spend at least two hours exploring the upper levels, they might find themselves cornered and unable to reach the lower levels. If the PCs reach the catacombs before the two hours pass, they might not encounter the Cultists until they are already engaged in a running battle with the undead minions therein. If the PCs complete their mission before the Cultists arrive, they emerge to find themselves confronted by the Followers of the Scaly Way or hunted by them as they make their way back to the ruins of Iniarv's Tower.

Voaraghamanthar's Eye

Helduth carries a gem given to him by Voaraghamanthar. This crystal, called *Voaraghamanthar's eye*, allows two-way communication with the dragon from anywhere in the Mere. One need only hold the gem while uttering the dragon's name to establish a link. If the dragon chooses not to respond, the transparent gem remains unchanged. If the dragon desires to communicate, his terrifying visage fills the inside of the gem. Voaraghamanthar can see through the crystal *eye* when he so chooses, provided the gem is uncovered. Voaraghamanthar can see through any facet, giving him 360° vision. While gazing through the *eye*, the black wyrm is susceptible to visual spells cast at the gem and saves against such attacks at –2, so he uses the *eye* sparingly.

Voaraghamanthar escorts the Followers of the Scaly Way safely through the Mere but parts company before reaching the Uthtower, not wanting to be seen by the PCs. (The PCs would undoubtedly mistake Voaraghamanthar for Waervaerendor or deduce that they are, indeed, two dragons.) Instead, he remains submerged beneath the murky surface of the Mere.

Voaraghamanthar doesn't care which group emerges victorious—the PCs or the Cult of the Dragon—but he has no intention of letting either group leave without giving him the bones of Chardansearavitriol or the Twinned Crown of Uthtower. His task is to ensure these items are recovered and that the victorious group is escorted safely from the Mere.

In any event, the initial encounter between the PCs and the Dragon Cultists could quickly devolve into hostilities, whether it becomes a running battle or a toe-to-toe fight to the finish. The Followers of the Scaly Way are not foolhardy, and Amalkyn employs the combined bandit gangs as effectively as possible. If necessary, they retreat and wait to ambush the PCs once they emerge from the ruins.

If any PCs deduce that the black dragon is playing both sides and successfully communicate their suspicions to the Dragon Cultists, Helduth uses his gem to contact Voaraghamanthar. The wyrm refuses to acknowledge that he has a twin and suggests that the two groups—the PCs and the Cultists—work together to complete their task. So long as his brother Waervaerendor has Sir Justin Melenikus and the watchers of Helm in his clutches, Voaraghamanthar sees the PCs as having little choice but to comply.

PCs can convince the Dragon Cultists that the black wyrm plans to betray them, although this requires a nonhostile reaction roll followed by a successful Charisma check at –4. Amalkyn is already suspicious of Voaraghamanthar's motives.

However, this does not dissuade him from retrieving the bones of Chardansearavitriol. If Amalkyn is slain, however, Helduth decides to cut his losses, drops *Voaraghamanthar's eye*, and flees the area (perhaps to be devoured later by one of the dragons).

The path taken by the Followers of the Scaly Way through the Uthtower and Mausoleum is simple and straightforward. After dispatching the obliviax and champion skeletons (in areas **1** and **2** respectively), they descend the staircase to the Mausoleum, passing through areas **13**, **14**, **18**, **19**, and defeating the knight denizen in area **19**. They pass through areas **23** and **25** without provoking the grandfather plaques but are driven back by the ghost in area **27**. The human bandits flee in terror from the spectral apparition. Without the PCs' help, Amalkyn and Helduth are unable to reach the tomb of the dracolich (area **29**).

If the PCs or the Cultists try to leave the area without completing their task, Voaraghamanthar emerges from the swamp and threatens to destroy them unless they complete their task. The dragon is more inclined to attack the Dragon Cultists than the PCs, since he has nothing in his possession to ensure the Cultists' compliance.

If the Cultists somehow obtain the bones of Chardansearavitriol or the Twinned Crown of Uthtower (by gaining the PCs' assistance and then betraying them), it is up to the PCs to recover the item or items in question before returning to the ruins of Iniarv's Tower. Voaraghamanthar uses his draconic might to help the PCs eradicate the remaining Cultists before agreeing the escort the PCs to the edge of the swamp.

The unfolding of this crucial encounter should be dictated by the circumstances as well as the DM's desires for the denouement of this adventure. Amalkyn, Helduth Flamespell, and Voaraghamanthar the are described in the sidebars on pages 30 and 38. The remaining Cult forces include 16 bandits recruited from the ranks of the two bandit lords' followers.

Bandits, human male F2 (16): INT average (8–10); AL any evil; AC 4; MV 12; hp 17, 15, 14, 13 (×3), 12 (×4), 11 (×3), 10, 9 (×2); THAC0 19;

The ominous Uthtower rises from its watery grave.

Followers of the Scaly Way

Amalkyn the Black, male pureblood yuan-ti F9: AL CE; AC 2 (*bracers of the blinding strike*, Dexterity); MV 12; hp 65; THAC0 12 (11 with Strength bonus, 8 with *shortsword +2* and weapon specialization); #AT 3; Dmg by weapon type (1d6+7 with *shortsword +2*); SA spells, +1 bonus to initiative rolls (*bracers of the blinding strike*), double number of strikes in one round 3/day (*bracers of the blinding strike*); Str 18/17, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 15; MR 20%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 14; XP 6,000; *MM*/369.

Notes: Amalkyn speaks Common, orc, and yuan-ti, and he can communicate with any snake or snakelike creature. His weapon proficiencies include Blades, Blowgun, Hand Crossbow, Two-Weapon Style specialization, and Weapon specialization in the Shortsword. His nonweapon proficiencies include Blindfighting, Hunting, Set Snares, Survival (Swamps), and Tracking. Once per day he can cast the following spells as a 6th-level spellcaster: *cause fear, darkness 15' radius, snake charm, sticks to snakes, neutralize poison, suggestion,* and *polymorph other*. Unlike some yuan-ti, Amalkyn has no psionic powers. Amalkyn venerates Sseth the Great Snake, although he is careful to display no obvious signs of veneration.

Magical Items: Amalkyn eschews all forms of armor except for his *bracers of the blinding strike* (see *EM:V1*, page 220). He wields two shortswords, *Freewalker* and *Tiefling's Blade*. The former is a *spellblade* (*EM:V4*, page 1404), a *shortsword +2* that conveys complete immunity to the 3rd-level Wizard spell *hold person* (but not the Priest spell of the same name or any other spell). The latter is a *shortsword +2* that retains it magical bonus on any plane of existence. Amalkyn seized it from a planewalking tiefling, but he is unaware of the sword's extraplanar properties. Tied to his belt is a snakeskin *bag of holding* with a 1,500-lb. carrying capacity. Finally, Amalkyn wears a *ring of Myrkul* that he captured in a battle with a horde of lacedons his bandit gang encountered in the northern reaches of the Mere, as well as a *ring of warmth* he employs to counteract the cold temperatures of the North.

Appearance: Amalkyn the Black appears as a powerfully built human male of Tashalaran ancestry, garbed in a black leather tunic and breeches with silver bracers marked with intricate whirls as his only apparent armor. His head is shaved bald, and he sports a black goatee. His eyes are a deep sea green. Two shortswords swing easily in their scabbards at his hips. Amalkyn ties a hand crossbow to his belt alongside a leather pouch of six envenomed (Type O poison) hand quarrels. He easily passes for human.

History: Amalkyn hails from the Serpent Hills, but he has long served his race by infiltrating and preying upon human society. For many years he practiced banditry along the Trade Way from Triel to the Boareskyr Bridge, his villainy earning him the sobriquets "the Black" and "the Cold-Blooded Snake" from the caravan masters who suffered his depredations. Several months ago Amalkyn decided to seek a new base in a setting where he was far less well known, and the bandit lord moved his gang, known as the Black Vipers, to the western Sword Mountains where they could prey on travelers along the High Road. Amalkyn has deliberately chosen not to forge extensive ties with his kinfolk active in the Mere of Dead Men. Instead, the bandit lord has forged strong ties with the Cult of the Dragon cell active in Leilon in the hopes of learning more of the process by which the Sacred Ones are created. Amalkyn hopes to benefit personally as well as to please his superiors by supplying the yuan-ti sorcerers with information on Sammaster's teachings.

Helduth Flamespell, male human W7 (Invoker): AL LE; AC 10 (4 or better with *shield* spell); MV 12; hp 28; THAC0 18 (15 with *quarterstaff +3*); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type, (1d6+3 with *quarterstaff +3*); Str 12, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 9, Cha 10; SZ M (5'6" tall); ML 11; XP 1,400.

Notes: Helduth speaks Common, as well as auld wyrmish, dwarvish, elvish, and orc. His weapon proficiencies include Dagger and Quarterstaff. His nonweapon proficiencies include Ancient History (Illusk and the North), Land-based Riding (horse), Local History (Luskan), Reading/Writing (Common, Dethek runes, Espruar, Thorass), Religion (Faerûnian), Spellcraft. He avoids melee combat unless absolutely necessary, preferring to place a wall of expendable hirelings between himself and the fray. Helduth both venerates Azuth and Iyachtu Xvim, although without a great deal of devotion in either case.

Helduth has little patience for his intellectual inferiors, and he regards those who swing swords instead of slinging magic as little better than battle fodder. Despite his intellectual arrogance, the invoker also has little understanding for the art of commanding loyalty, choosing to ignore the day-to-day details of leadership unless forced to deal with a situation that has developed into a crisis.

Spells: Thanks to his decision not to return to the Hosttower of the Arcane, Helduth has not had the opportunity to recover his original spellbook. During his foray to the Ice Lakes region, he brought with him a traveling tome with only a few choice spells, including *alarm, gauntlet, magic missile, read magic, shield, flaming sphere, knock, levitate, mirror image, augmentation I, fireball, lightning bolt, fire shield,* and *wall of ice*. Fortunately for him, Helduth recently stumbled across a volume consisting of red-dyed rothé-hide stretched over wooden boards and bound with brass hoops, enclosing 22 parchment pages. He recognized it as *Detho's Libram* (*EM:V3*, pages 1162–1165), lost some seven years before the Time of Troubles, and has begun to employ the spells found within. The libram contains 22 spells: *burning hands, catapult, dancing lights, detect magic, Detho's delirium* (also known as *dreamspeak*), *enlarge, erase, feather fall, hold portal, jump, light, mending, push, read magic, spider climb, unseen servant; continual light, decastave, detect invisibility, ESP, flying fist,* and *knock*.

His current roster of spells includes: *burning hands* (×2), *gauntlet, catapult, detect magic; decastave, levitate, mirror image* (×2); *fireball* (×2), *lightning bolt; fire shield,* and *wall of ice*.

Magical Items: Helduth wields a *quarterstaff +3* in battle. He wears a *ring of Myrkul* and carries *Voaraghamanthar's eye*, a transparent 500-gp gem that allows the mage and the dragon to communicate over any distance within the Mere.

Appearance: Helduth's pale, thinning blonde hair is pulled back in a ponytail and exaggerates his aquiline features. He dresses in loose, ill-fitting robes stained with dirt.

History: Helduth is a renegade wizard of the Arcane Brotherhood. He fled the Hosttower of the Arcane in Luskan several months ago in the aftermath of a disastrous expedition to the Ice Lakes region. Seeking to explore several mysterious crypts dug into the cliffs that overlook the Black Raven River, the adventuring band he led was ambushed by Uthgardt barbarians of the Black Raven tribe and nearly annihilated. Fearing censure for his latest failure, Helduth slew his few surviving comrades and fled for points farther south. A chance encounter with a small group of bandits led to the hasty decision to overthrow their commander and seize the mantle of leadership for himself, much to the later regret of both the remaining bandits and the Wizard himself. Through one of the members of his bandit gang, Helduth was introduced to the leaders of the Cult of the Dragon cell in Leilon. Intrigued by the power the Sacred Ones command and fearful of the day that the Arcane Brotherhood discovers he still lives, Helduth has become increasingly involved with the Followers of the Scaly Way. Like Amalkyn, Helduth and his men have undertaken a handful of small missions for the Cult, but the search for the Chardansearavitriol's lair is by far the largest such operation performed by the group to date.

#AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML Amalkyn's forces: 13 (×8), Helduth's forces: 7 (×8); XP 35; chainmail, shield, longsword.

The Uthtower

The ancestral seat of the Royal House of Myrmoran is a sodden, shattered reminder of its former glory. Built atop a rocky pinnacle that rises some ten feet above the waterline, the Uthtower is a roughly cylindrical tower with an extended first level. The broken spire still stands nearly 70 feet tall at its highest point, but its third floor is open to the sky.

The most obvious entrance into the tower is through the main gates, located at the top of a steeply inclined path that clings to the face of the rocky pinnacle on which the tower stands. PCs capable of climbing the slick walls (–25% to all climbing checks) or flight can enter through the narrow windows of the second and third floors or drop through the gaping hole in the roof of the tower to the third floor.

The doors of the Uthtower and the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath below are fashioned of duskwood, a stout wood with the strength of iron. Years of immersion in the waters of the Mere have caused the wooden doors to swell shut, and all Open Doors checks are made with a –2 penalty.

Narrow window slits open into each chamber of the second and third floor. Each window is 1 foot wide, 2 feet high, and 5 feet deep. A small niche is carved in the ceiling of each window slit, midway between the outside surface of the tower and the inner chamber. Lurking upside down in each niche is a single dread, armed with a rusted scimitar and ready to attack any intruder not wearing a *ring of Myrkul*. (The scimitars have a 25% chance of breaking with each successful hit.) The dreads do not leave the narrow confines of their individual window slits.

Dreads (one per window slit): INT non (0); AL N; AC 6; MV 6, fly 15 (B), swim 9, jump 3; HD 3+3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 or by weapon type (1d8 with rusted scimitar); SD immune to *charm*, disintegrate, *hold*, mind-related, polymorph-related, *shatter*, and *sleep* spells; immune to cold-based attacks; half-damage from edged and piercing weapons, *regenerate* 2 hp per day; SZ S; ML 20; XP 650; *MC Annual 1*.

Unholy Ground

When Myrkul's position as a greater power of the Faerûnian pantheon was unchallenged, the temple was warded with powerful magical manifestations of his divinity. The death of the Lord of Bones has significantly weakened his power on the unholy grounds of his temple, but a measure of necromantic influence still remains.

Until such time as Myrkul's vestigial power in the Uthtower and the Mausoleum is broken, the entire above and below ground structure should be considered to be permeated with a mystical field that prevents the turning of undead and cloaks all devout living and undead followers of Myrkul with the benefits of a *protection from good* spell.

Myrkul's Ebbing Aura

The reappearance of the Uthtower amidst the gloomy fens of the Mere expended a great deal of Myrkul's lingering power.

The tenuous nature of Myrkul's position is most evident in the importance of his remaining symbols of power. Each time one of these symbols is defaced or destroyed, Myrkul's influence in the Mere is weakened, and the entire temple quakes as if shaken by a minor tremor. In game terms, destruction of the most potent relics of Myrkul's faith weakens the magic that maintains the reemergence of the Uthtower and the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath. Some individual items are noted as having **deific support points**. If a net of seven or more points of deific support are lost by desecrating such items, Myrkul's power quickly ebbs. In such a scenario, the Uthtower slowly crumbles into a pile of rubble as the rocky pinnacle on which it stands sinks back into the Mere. The catacombs below do not immediately collapse, but a slow process of decay sets in, ensuring the structure's eventual destruction. And finally, from the perspective of observers in the Mere, the new moon passes outside the circle of seven stars, and the power of the Lord of Bones is forever broken in the Mere of Dead Men.

Employing a *ring of Myrkul* within the temple's confines has the opposite effect. Every ten levels of spell energy employed by one or more *rings of Myrkul* within the confines of the Uthtower or the Mausoleum increases the deific support of the temple by 1 point (and incidentally weakens the ring bearer by 1 hp permanently upon the passing of the Eye of Myrkul). The benefits and risks of such powers also apply to Amalkyn the Black and Helduth Flamespell.

If by the end of the adventure and through the actions the PCs the net change in deific support points is positive, the PCs suffer a 5,000 XP penalty to their story award, for the Lord of Bones has been strengthened, not weakened, by their actions.

The *Rings of Myrkul*

The *rings of Myrkul* are the primary magical agents behind the reemergence of the Uthtower from the Mere of Dead Men. Depending on the size of their adventuring band and the degree of success they have had in recovering multiple *rings of Myrkul*, many or all of the PCs might have the power to pass unscathed and unnoticed by the lesser undead, if they so choose. (This benefit is also conferred to Amalkyn and Helduth, of course, since they too bear *rings of Myrkul*.) If all the PCs bear *rings of Myrkul* (or judiciously employ magics such as the 1st-level Priest spell *invisibility to undead*), their expedition of the Uthtower is made easier by dint of their earlier successes. If only some of the PCs bear *rings of Myrkul*, they still hold a sizable tactical advantage against the Uthtower's guardians, but their path through the temple of Myrkul is apt to be much more treacherous.

1. Rocky Pinnacle. The cobblestone path that leads up the steep incline of the rocky pinnacle has been swept free of silt and debris by the deluge from the tower's upper floors, but the slick mossy coating makes for a treacherous ascent. To avoid sliding back down into the waters of the Mere, each PC must make a successful Dexterity check to reach the summit. Skilled climbers, including PCs with the Mountaineering proficiency or Thieves with Climb Walls

abilities, succeed automatically. Those who attempt to make the ascent without resorting to their hands and knees automatically fail and slide ignominiously into the swamp. Scaling the sheer rockface off the path is even more treacherous. Climbers must make a successful climbing check with a –10% penalty.

A small, long-dormant obliviax hides among the slime-coated stones at the base of the tower wall, some five feet from the edge of the cobblestone path. The memory moss can sense intelligent creatures within 60 feet of its location and chooses one sentient being to attack, preferring Wizards above other spellcasters. It attacks once per round until it succeeds, then makes no more attacks for 24 hours. If attacked, it forms part of itself into a tiny moss imitation of the creature whose memories it stole. The mossling remains attached to the parent moss and defends it by casting stolen spells. The memory moss has not stolen any memories or spells in a long time, and thus any victim who consumes it regain no memories or spells except their own.

Obliviax: INT average (8); AL NE; AC 10; MV 0; HD ¼; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA steals memories and spells, employs stolen spells; SZ T; ML 9; XP 35; *MM*/293.

2. Gatehouse. The gatehouse is a rectangularly shaped structure on the tower's flank with a steeply sloping roof that blends seamlessly into the adjoining cylindrical walls. The only external entrance to the gatehouse is a pair of steel-reinforced duskwood doors, swollen shut by their long immersion in the brackish waters of the Mere. The doors have survived their extended bath relatively unscathed, although the first signs of rot have begun to mar their surfaces.

Passage through the double doors is barred by a *lock* spell (essentially a Priest's variant of the *wizard lock* spell) cast at 14th-level. Anyone who speaks the word "Ebondeath" can bypass the ward for the next seven rounds. In addition, a powerful *glyph of warding* is triggered by anyone who attempts to open the twin portals who does not venerate Myrkul or wear a *ring of Myrkul*. The *glyph* unleashes the effects of the 6th-level Myrkulyte Priest spell *dolorous decay*—a withering that spreads from existing injuries, inflicting additional damage. The spell is fully detailed in *Faiths & Avatars* (page 128); if this resource is unavailable, the *glyph* afflicts mummy rot instead.

Inside, the gatehouse is a 15' × 20' room with a steeply sloping roof that ascends from approximately 12 feet to nearly 20 feet near the back wall. A single door stands closed at both the northern and southern ends of the eastern wall. Stagnant water, over 1 foot deep, covers the floor. The rotted remnants of once-fine tapestries adorn the north and south walls, but the all-pervasive murk has reduced them to tattered strands in the years since the temple sank beneath the surface of the Mere.

Four champion skeletons stand as silent guardians in this chamber. Each wields a rusted longsword. There is a 20% chance per successful strike that a rusted blade shatters, forcing its undead wielder to fight unarmed, as the blades have not weathered the conditions nearly as well as their wielders. The skeletons do not attack PCs wearing *rings of Myrkul* unless attacked by them first.

Champion skeletons (4): INT non (0); AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or 1d2 unarmed; SA *coldfire*; SD immune to all cold-based attacks as well as *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells edged or piercing weapons do only half damage; MR all spells are turned 100% (as a *ring of spell turning*); SZ M (6' tall); ML 20; XP 1,400; *Dragon Magazine* #188.

SA—When "killed," champion skeletons collapse into heaps of bone, but unless a *dispel magic* is cast upon their remains or all the bone shards are immersed in holy water, they reform and animate 2d4 rounds later at their full hit points, attacking all living creatures in the vicinity. This rise is accompanied by a pale-white, flickering burst of *faerie fire* radiance known as *coldfire*, which lasts for one round. Any living thing touching or attacking an undead emanating *coldfire* suffers 2d4 points of cold-based damage. Champion skeletons rise up three times each.

SW—Champion skeletons suffer 2d4 points of damage per vial from holy water.

3. Great Hall. Two stout duskwood doors lead in from the gatehouse, swollen shut by the water. Three doors lead eastward into the smaller rooms and central staircase beyond. A foot of standing water covers the floor until one of the doors through which the water can flow is breached.

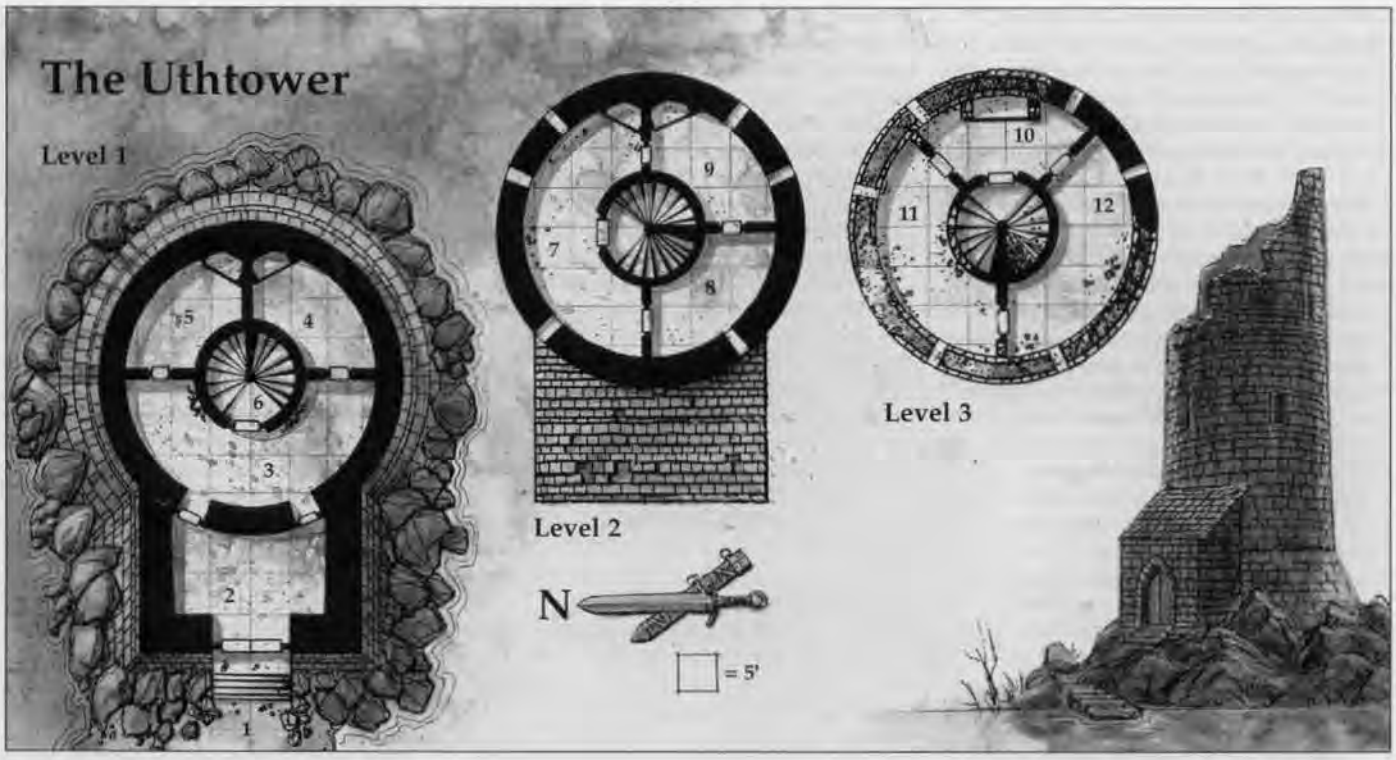
All that remains in the once grand chamber are twin dragon skulls carved into the convex outside walls of the central staircase. These skulls flicker with deep purple continual *faerie fire*. Although fearsome, both carvings are merely totems of Chardansearavitriol. Defacing either dragon skull weakens the tower's deific support by 1 point, and defacing both weakens it by 2 points, although dispelling the magical flames has no impact beyond the obvious visual effect.

4. Barracks. This wedge-shaped chamber is over 20 feet long at its greatest extent. A small hearth and chimney in the eastern corner once provided warmth to the tower guards berthed here, but now a small pile of silt and slime spills forth from the long-cold fireplace. The rotted remains of a dozen tightly-packed, wooden bunkbeds lie across the floor. The water stands a foot deep until the door is breached and an outflow is provided through the Great Hall.

A careful search of the muck that coats the chamber's floor reveals 1d6 silver coins of varied ancient mintage per hour of searching. At most, 24 such coins may be found.

5. Armory. A small hearth and chimney in the eastern corner gushes forth silt and slime. The water stands a foot deep until the door is breached and an outflow is provided through the Great Hall beyond.

The Myrkulytes used this chamber as an armory, but little remains of the once-fine arsenal stored within. What the fleeing cultists did not seize as they fled has been destroyed by the brackish waters. A few deeply corroded scimitars, scythes, maces, flails, and other weapons lie scattered across the floor, the wooden weapon racks on which they once rested having long since rotted away. All but one of the weapons are worthless, and they shatter upon their first successful strike.



One Myrkulyte weapon remains in pristine condition, thanks to the magical enchantments it bears, despite being buried beneath the silt. *Death's Edge* is a *scimitar +1, +3 vs. warm-blooded creatures*. It has a hilt of bone and a black steel blade. On a natural roll of 20, the weapon's blade flickers with a thin film of Negative Energy, inflicting an additional 4d4 points of damage unless the victim is tied to the Negative Energy Plane or protected by a *negative plane protection* spell. At will, the scimitar can detect the presence of warm-blooded creatures within 30 feet. *Death's Edge* is sentient (INT 12, Ego 7) and Neutral Evil, and it communicates empathically by means of bitter chill that infuses its hilt. *Death's Edge* can be employed by wielders of any alignment, but a nonevil, warm-blooded wielder also suffers 4d4 points of damage on every natural 20, and any protections against the effects of the Negative Energy Plane are ineffective while the blade is wielded.

6. Great Staircase. Steps of wet stone lead up the Uthtower's central shaft and down into the catacombs. When the tower was erected, stout wooden doors spaced one-and-a-quarter revolutions apart led from the great staircase to the tower's above-ground floors and roof. In the centuries since the tower's construction, the upper walls of the central shaft have collapsed, and now the great staircase ends in the open air nearly 18 feet above the third floor.

The doors in the staircase open into the chambers beyond. If a door to the first, second, or third level is opened before the standing water beyond is drained, a torrent of water pours forth and runs down the staircase. A successful Dexterity check with a –2 penalty is required of anyone standing in the path of the flood (i.e., at or below the step onto which the door opens). Failure indicates the unlucky victim is swept down a full revolution of the stairs, suffering 1d4 points of damage, at which time another Dexterity check is required. This process repeats until the victim suffers 8d4 points of damage or a Dexterity check succeeds. A PC failing every Dexterity check is carried to the base of the staircase leading into the mausoleum (see area **13**).

Before petering out above the third level, the staircase ceiling follows the stepped pattern of the stairs themselves. Hidden in the shadows of the ceiling directly opposite the door to the third level, where they can be easily seen, are three human skulls on near-invisible strings. Each skull is enchanted with a *skullshatter* spell, inflicting 1d8 points of damage to creatures within a 9' radius. (See "New Spells" sidebar for more details on the *skullshatter* spell.) The central skull bears a *magic mouth* dweomer as well, which when triggered unleashes a blood-curdling scream audible to anyone in a room adjoining the central staircase. Both of the central skull's dweomers are triggered by the presence of a living creature breaking the line of sight between it and the opposing door. The *skullshatter* dweomers of the other two skulls are triggered by the explosion of the central skull. In addition, the initial explosion unleashes a small packet of *dust of sneezing and choking* hidden inside the central skull. Although kept in a waterproof package, a small amount of moisture has dampened the magical dust; thus, victims automatically make their saving throws vs. poison to avoid its most deadly effect but are still temporarily incapacitated by its other effects if their saving throws fail.

7. Throne Room. Once the throne room of the monarchs of Uthtower, this large, 12' high, semicircular chamber is dominated by a great throne of bone built for Strongor Bonebag and the high priests of the Ebondeath Sect who succeeded him. Three window slits, each guarded by an individual dread as noted above, open out into the Mere. A medium-sized hearth and chimney in the eastern corner once provided warmth. Now, small piles of silt and slime spill forth from the fireplace and dreary window slits. Standing water fills the chamber to a depth of three feet—the height of the bottom of the window slits—until the door to the great staircase is opened. White marble tiles, each the hue of bleached bone and engraved with the image of a dragon skull, adorn the floor, and the tattered remnants of rich tapestries hang from metal hooks in the walls.

Once the throne was invested with a great number of dweomers, but the magical power of the high priest's seat faded with the destruction of the Lord of Bones and the sinking of the Uthtower beneath the dark waters of the Mere. Nonetheless, a small measure of Myrkul's divine taint remains within the throne, for it still radiates evil and necromantic magic. Any significant damage to the high priest's traditional seat weakens the tower's deific support by 1 point.

8. Council Chamber. A great mahogany table lies crumbled on the dark marble floor. One window slit, guarded by an individual dread as noted above, opens out into the Mere. Standing water fills the chamber to a depth of three feet—the height of the bottom of the window slits—until the door to the kitchen or throne room is opened.

A painted map of the Sword Coast, ere the Curse of Iniarv inundated Uthtower, once adorned the curved inner wall of the chamber, but only faded chips of its former detail remain. At the DM's option, a PC with the Cartography or Ancient History proficiency might be able to deduce the location of other long-lost ruins in the lands once claimed by the monarchs of Yarlith and Uthtower from a careful study of the fragmentary remains of the map.

9. Kitchen. This chamber spans over 20 feet at its widest extent. A medium-sized hearth and chimney in the eastern corner once served as a kitchen cooking area, and all food preparation for the royal family was done here. Members of the Ebondeath Sect who succeeded the Royal House of Myrmoran employed this chamber for a similar purpose. Two window slits, each guarded by an individual dread as noted above, open out into the Mere. Standing water fills the chamber to a depth of three feet until the door to the council chamber or throne room is opened.

10. Library. Damage caused by the sinking of the Uthtower has left this room open to the sky. A large hearth and chimney along the eastern wall once warmed this chamber and the two adjoining bedchambers. Silt, water, and debris reaches as high as the base of the twin window slits, each of which is guarded by an individual dread as noted above.

This room served as a library for both the kings of Uthtower and the Myrkulytes who succeeded them. The tomes were stored on shelves carved into the walls before the Uthtower sank into the Mere. Before fleeing, several cultists managed to gather nearly every tome of value from the wooden shelves, but the fate of those volumes is unknown. Those books left behind were nonmagical, and they disintegrated—with one notable exception.

Anyone who spends at least one hour digging through the muck has a 25% chance per turn of finding the fell tome left behind by the fleeing priests. Seemingly unharmed by its lengthy immersion, the tome is wrapped in a cover fashioned from the skin of a black dragon inlaid with a depiction of a dragon skull in white marble. The book radiates magic and has the powers of a *book of vile darkness*. Destruction of this Myrkulyte relic lessens the tower's deific support by 1 point, as discussed above.

11–12. Bedchambers. Damage caused by the Uthtower's sinking has left both rooms open to the sky. Nearly three feet of silt, water, and debris covers the floor to the base of the window slits, each of which is guarded by a dread.

These rooms served as the bedchambers of the king and queen of Uthtower before that realm's fall and later were occupied by the ranking priests of the Ebondeath Sect. Nothing remains of the opulent furnishings that once graced these chambers aside from bits of rotted cloth and wood amid the debris.

Beneath the muck in area **11**, once known as the King's Chamber, is a small storage niche hidden beneath a secret panel in the floor and sealed against moisture. The chamber's last occupant never recovered the *phylactery of faithfulness* or twin blocks of *incense of meditation* stored within a small leather satchel hidden therein. Anyone who opens the niche releases five flying fingers—aerial variants of crawling claws—that still serve as guardians. The flying fingers attack everyone present unless the word "Vitriol" is spoken by whoever lifts the floor plate. The flying fingers do not attack any PC wearing a *ring of Myrkul* unless attacked by him.

Flying fingers have eyes sewn onto their palms, giving them 90' infravision. The can sense vibrations and temperature differences even when their eyes are blinded and locate targets accordingly.

Flying fingers (5): INT low (5); AL LE; AC 7; MV 9, fly 15 (A); HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 16 (19 if blinded); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (foes in metal armor) or 1d6 (foes in leather or no armor); SA spells; SD see below; SZ T; ML 20; XP 270; *Ruins of Undermountain* and *Dragon Magazine* #188.

SA—Each flying finger has been enspelled to deliver a single touch spell upon its first successful attack. Suggested spells include *burning hands, cause light wounds, chill touch, ghoul touch, faerie fire,* and *shocking grasp*.

SD—Flying fingers are immune to turning, holy water, *charm, sleep,* and *hold* spells, undead control, death magic, and *raise dead* spells. *Resurrection* spells render them immobile for one turn per caster level. Edged weapons inflict only half damage. Magical weapons cause only "normal," nonmagical damage, though attack bonuses still apply.

SW—Cold-based spells make flying fingers brittle so that all damage rolls are increased by 1 point per die.

The Mausoleum

While Myrkul's temple encompasses both the Uthtower and the catacombs below, its name—the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath—is used in reference to the entire house of worship. The above sections entitled "Unholy Ground," "Myrkul's Ebbing Aura," and "The Rings of Myrkul" also apply to areas **13–30**.

Originally, the mausoleum beneath the Uthtower served as both the cellars and crypts of the Royal House of Myrmoran. With the fall of the realm and Chardansearavitriol's coming, the catacombs were expanded—a process that continued with the establishment of the Ebondeath Sect in the centuries that followed. (Careful deduction reveals that Chardansearavitriol must have employed magic similar to the Wizard spell *reduce*, for many of the chambers and passageways are far too small to have accommodated his bulk.) In the aftermath of the Time of Troubles, the dark waters of the saltwater swamp poured down the great staircase of the Uthtower as that edifice sank beneath the surface, inundating the catacombs below. When the waters finally calmed, the flooded Mausoleum of the Ebondeath rested deep beneath the bottom of the Mere, magically sunk even deeper into the bedrock by the last act of Myrkul.

Now that the Uthtower has resurfaced, even if only until dawn's first rays drive the Eye of Myrkul from the sky, ancient mechanical pumps have begun to lower the water level once again. As the water level slowly drops, the clammy stone walls are unveiled and the cacophony of a subterranean rain shower echoes throughout the complex.

For every hour that passes following the rise of the Uthtower, the water level drops two feet until naught but puddles remain or the pumps are overwhelmed by the tower's resubmersion. Except as noted below, passageways and rooms throughout the Mausoleum are of similar construction and initially filled with water.

Corridors and chambers have arched ceilings 12 feet high at their peaked midpoint, descending to 10 feet high at each wall. As such, depending on the length of time that has passed since the reemergence of the Uthtower, it takes a little less than six hours for the Mausoleum to be entirely drained of water. There is remarkably little silt throughout the complex, except in areas **20–26** where the dark waters of the Mere have deposited a great deal of the ambient silt. Nevertheless, gaps between stone doors and their sills allow the dark waters to run easily from chamber to chamber, even when such portals are shut tight.

Descriptions given below assume the entire complex has been largely drained of water, although the PCs would be advised to begin exploring well before the process concludes if they have the spells, magical items, or swimming skills necessary to do so, and the DM should adjust setting representations accordingly.

13. Entrance Hallway. The stone steps that lead up through the core of the Uthtower (area **6**) also lead down into the catacombs below. A full seven revolutions below the first level of the Uthtower, the seemingly endless staircase ends in a 10' wide, 30' long hallway.

The first living being to pass into the hallway (whether walking or swimming) once the Uthtower rises from the Mere triggers a *magic mouth*. For the next seven rounds, the chanting of a solitary Priest of Myrkul echoes along the hallway. Although no meaning can be deciphered from the words of the ghostly voice, the unholy prayer engenders a feeling of great unease in any who listen to it.

14. Storeroom & Barracks. This rectangular chamber served the inhabitants of the Uthtower as a storeroom. For the Ebondeath Sect, the room doubled as both a guard chamber and barracks for the lowest-ranking members of the cult.

A careful search of the room reveals six shattered skeletons as well as a few badly rusted maces, scythes, and flails. For every turn of searching, 1d6 gold, silver, and copper coins may be found, up to a maximum of 86 gp, 143 sp, and 98 cp.

15. Wine Cellar & Barracks. This chamber once housed the king's wine collection. Small, round peg holes once held great racks of wine, but no other clues bespeak the room's original purpose. Lower-ranking Priests of the Ebondeath Sect were housed here, and many bones as well as thick piles of solidified candle wax mixed with bone from their unholy ceremonies still cover the floor.

The secret doors in this room is cunningly crafted and difficult to detect. Elves and dwarves have a 1-in-6 chance of finding the secret door; other races have a 1-in-12 chance. A small gap does remain around the edges of the door, and this is sufficient to allow the unhindered passage of water. Any PC who carefully observes the slight current as the water level sinks has a normal chance of detecting either secret door.

16. Wide Hallway & Guardroom. This hallway leads to what was once a secondary storeroom for the folk of the Uthtower.

A total of six shields bearing the skull of Myrkul hang on the walls—three on the west wall and three on the east wall. While five of them are badly rusted and pocked with holes, one stands uncorroded and radiates magic when a *detect magic* spell is cast. When borne by a follower of a current or former god of the dead in the Faerûnian pantheon—a roster that includes Jergal, Myrkul, Cyric, and Kelemvor—the shield acts as a *shield +1, +2 vs. undead*. In the hands of anyone else, it serves as a *shield –1, missile attractor*.

17. High Priest's Quarters. This chamber served the inhabitants of the Uthtower as a storeroom. For the Ebondeath Sect, the room housed the cult's preeminent leader, usually a high priest of Myrkul.

Nothing remains to indicate the room's former purpose aside from a pair of giant, misshapen skulls that lie against the south wall. Anyone familiar with the anatomy of the giant races recognizes these skulls as belonging to fomorian giants. How they got here is a mystery, but these are the skulls of the legendary Sar and Helimbrar, brutes slain by the early Warlords of Waterdeep roughly four centuries ago and for whom the two southernmost peaks of the Sword Mountains are named. If contacted via a *speak with dead* spell or similar

magic, either spirit can provide interesting perspectives on the history of Waterdeep in the time of Ahghairon. Once their true nature is ascertained, these skulls can be sold to interested sages for 500 gp each.

18. Barracks. This chamber is of newer construction than the rest of the Uthtower's cellars and was built by the Ebondeath Sect. Priests of the Sect were housed here, and many bones as well as thick piles of solidified candle wax from their unholy ceremonies still cover the floor.

The room contains a scattered array of rusted weapons, none of which is usable. A careful search of the southwest corner reveals a tiny storage niche concealed by a false panel. (Thieves may use their Find Traps ability to locate the panel; otherwise, treat it as a secret door.) Within the secret cranny is a waterproof, plugged, bone scroll tube containing two clerical scrolls (*negative plane protection* and *raise dead* cast at 10th level).

The secret door in this room is similar to the one in area **15**.

19. Denizen in the Dark. While the rulers of Uthtower once fashioned a series of traps in this passageway to protect the burial vaults beyond, they were removed by the Myrkulytes who traversed this hall regularly. With the sinking of the temple, only one guardian remains—a fiend who once inhabited the Mausoleum as a high-ranking Priest of the Ebondeath Sect and is now magically bound as a guardian of the crypts beyond.

As the knight denizen has long been stranded on the Prime, far from any open gate to the Gray Waste, he has lost many of his special abilities. In combat, the fiend attacks viciously, picking off the weakest opponents first. He stands in the middle of the hall but lunges to strike any PC emerging from the secret door.

In appearance, the denizen has a grotesque, cask-like body with gangly, misshapen arms that drag along the ground. His short legs belie his speed and grace. The fiend has a humanlike head and features, except for bilious fangs and glowing red eyes. He speaks in a low, guttural voice, but only to taunt and curse his foes. The denizen never checks morale, content to inflict harm upon his opponents or be slain (and thereby released from this onerous duty). Destroying the denizen saps the temple of 1 deific strength point.

The denizen has 60' infravision and extraordinarily acute senses of smell and taste. It can survive underwater without difficulty. Although denizens can wield weapons, this one is unarmed.

Knight denizen: INT average (10); AL LE; AC 1; MV 12; HD 8; hp 47; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SD regenerates 1 hp/day, immune to fire- or heat-based attacks; MR 30%; SZ M (7' tall); ML 20; XP 2,000; *FRE3*.

20–26. Vaults of the Uthlords. These seven chambers house the remains of Uthtower's noble families. Burial niches in the walls behind carved stone plaques hold the remains of patriarchs, matriarchs, consorts, and immediate kin of the seven noble houses that held seats on Uthtower's Council of Lords. The niches are 3 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 9 feet deep and stacked three-high along the walls. (Each niche on the map actually represents three separate niches, one stacked upon the other.)

The family crest of each house was once inscribed on the floor of each tomb as a mosaic, but the ravages of time and water have largely obscured the original designs.

Although the nobility of Uthtower considered it an honor to inter their kin here, few trusted their monarchs sufficiently to place wealth or items of magical power with the interred remains. As a result, few if any burial niches contain more than skeletal remains and ruined funerary robes. Most traps and spells cast upon the crypts were removed by members of the Ebondeath Sect who sought to walk unhindered among the crypts of the dead.

While empty niches are capped with plain, nonmagical stone, each occupied burial alcove is covered by a grandfather plaque resembling a bas relief of a male or female human face with dignified features. Beneath each plaque is inscribed the name of the person interred within, as well as the dates of their birth and death, and, in some cases, a cryptic inscription. Note that dates are given in Uth Reckoning, commonly abbreviated UR, with 1 UR corresponding to 146 DR.

If addressed or touched in any fashion, each grandfather plaque recites the inscription in the archaic dialect of the Common tongue once spoken throughout the Twilit Land and then falls silent. If attacked, each grandfather plaque defends itself and the burial niche it guards to the best of its ability; any other grandfather plaques in the same room join in the fray as well. Under no circumstances do the grandfather plaques allow anyone to defile the crypts they guard. (At the DM's option, one of the PCs could be descended from one of the noble families of Uthtower and thus free to open the burial alcoves of one of the Vaults of the Uthlords should he or she so choose.)

Grandfather plaques: INT average (10); AL LN; AC 6; MV 0; HD 6+2; hp 27 each; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA *magic missile, shout, weakness*; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ S (1'–2' tall); ML 17; XP 2,000; *MC Annual 3*/49.

20. Vault of House Aunforthar. This burial vault contains the remains of thirty nobles from House Aunforthar, and thus thirty grandfather plaques. The family crest is a brilliant blue crab over three stylized waves.

21. Vault of House Scarthann. This vault contains the remains of twenty-seven nobles from House Scarthann, and thus twenty-seven grandfather plaques. The family crest features twin mountain peaks split by a ribbon of water.

22. Vault of House Hornsong. This burial vault contains the remains of seventeen nobles from House Hornsong, and thus seventeen grandfather plaques. The family crest is dominated by images of a great horn over a shattered castle.

23. Vault of House Greenmarch. This vault contains the remains of twenty-seven nobles from House Greenmarch, and thus twenty-seven grandfather plaques. The family crest include images of a great tree overlaid with crossed swords.

One of the niches in this chamber lies open and empty. A shattered and

nonmagical grandfather plaque lies below the empty alcove. If the stone fragments are reassembled and placed in the proper order, the plaque's inscription can be reconstructed and reads as follows: *"Abadda Moonglamaer, Unicorn Prince of Phalorm, b. 378 UR, d. 501 UR."* Anyone who makes a cursory examination of the dates throughout the Vaults of the Uthlords realizes that Abadda's date of death is thirty-one years later than any other recorded date and that the length of Abadda's life was more than two decades longer than anyone else so interred. Also, anyone with specific knowledge of the ancient history of the Twilit Land realizes that there was no district named "Phalorm" in either Uthtower or Yarlith. See "The Curst Prince" sidebar for details of this mystery.

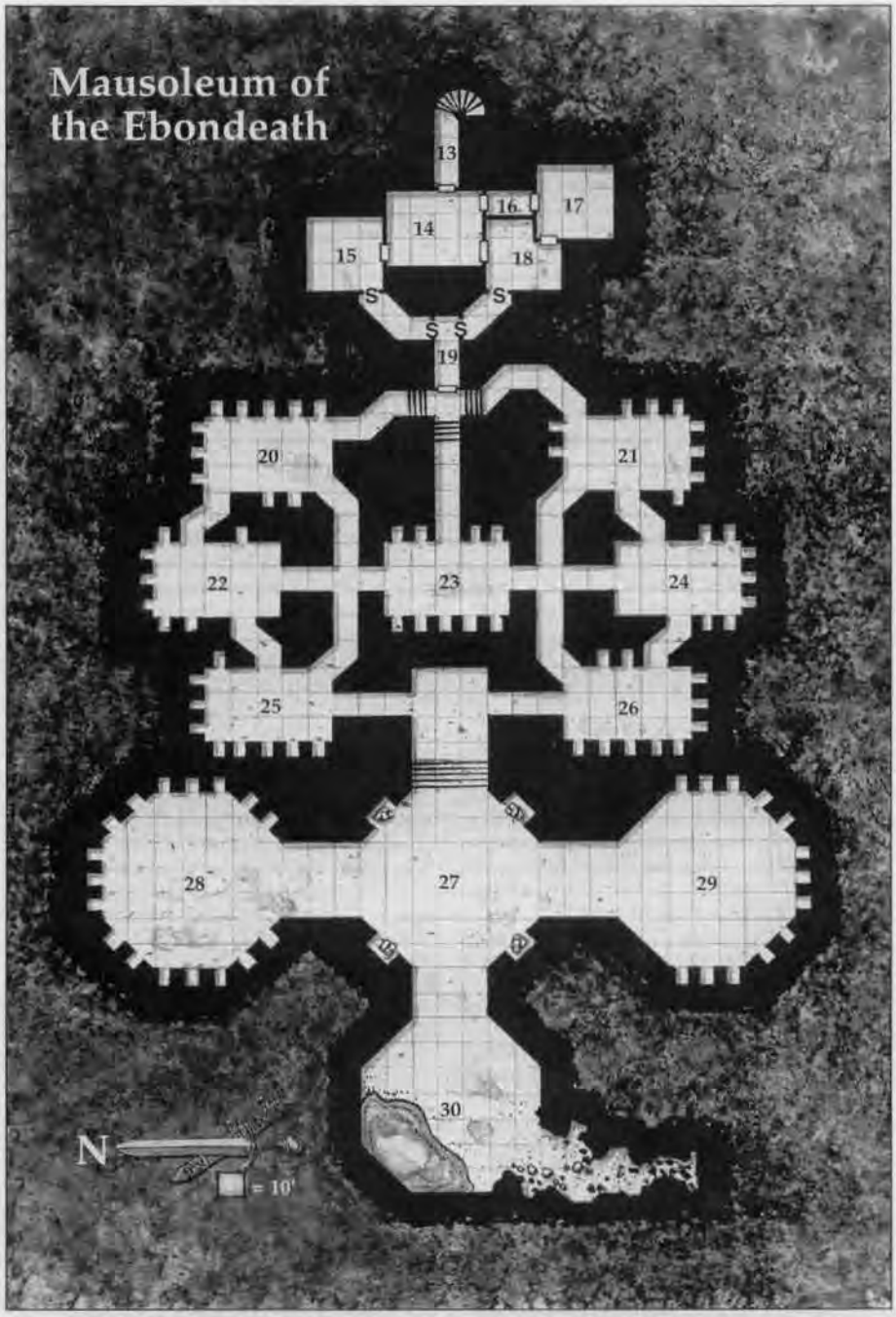
24. Vault of House Ruldegost. This burial vault contains the remains of twenty-one nobles from House Ruldegost, and thus twenty-one grandfather plaques. The family crest is dominated by images of a suit of armor on a field of fire.

At least one member of House Ruldegost escaped the fall of Uthtower, and his descendants survive to this day as a Waterdhavian noble family of the same name, although the family's ties to ancient Uthtower have been forgotten.

25. Vault of House Bentather. This burial vault contains the remains of twenty-four nobles from House Bentather, and thus twenty-four grandfather plaques. The family crest is dominated by a great boar's head atop a bloodied spear.

26. Vault of House Forkarl. This burial vault contains the remains of twenty-seven nobles from House Forkarl, and thus twenty-seven grandfather plaques. The family crest on the vault floor features a rampant griffon facing forward.

27–30. Royal Crypts of Myrmoran. These octagonal chambers house the remains of the Royal House of Myrmoran. Each great chamber is adorned with marble tiles bleached the color of old bone. The domed ceilings soar to a height of 30 feet.



Originally the central chamber was the only royal crypt constructed, but with the creation of Yarlith from the unincorporated territories of northern Uthtower, two more octagonal chambers were dug to the north and south.

With Chardansearavitriol's coming, the Royal Crypts of Myrmoran served as the wyrm's primary lair, for the rest of the subterranean complex was too small for him to pass without the assistance of magic. A fourth chamber of identical construction was built as well. After the Ebondeath's heralded ascension in the Year of the Dragon Altar (1202 DR), the members of the Ebondeath Sect transformed area **29** into an unholy chapel.

Any treasures interred within these royal crypts were removed by Chardansearavitriol to garnish his own hoard. As with much of the

The Curst Prince

Abadda Moonglamaer, an elven prince of the Fallen Kingdom who was transformed into a curst during the fall of Uthtower, still haunts the flooded halls of the Mausoleum. Although he primarily wanders areas **20–26** (5% chance per turn, noncumulative, of an encounter), he sometimes enters areas **27–30** (1% chance per turn, noncumulative, of an encounter).

Abadda Moonglamaer (curst): INT genius (17); AL CN; AC 3 (elven chainmail, Dexterity); MV 12; F9; hp 63; THAC0 12 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type, typically 1d8 (longsword); SA +1 bonus to hit with bows and swords, +4 bonus to hit species enemy (orcs); SD immune to mind-related spells such as *charm, ESP, hold,* and *sleep*; immune to cold, fire, and energy draining; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 7 (was 14); MR 85%; SZ M (5'8" tall); ML 10; XP 8,000; *MC Annual 2/32*.

Abadda was once a Cleric/Ranger who venerated Corellon Larethian, but he has lost both his faith and all his magical abilities as a result of his transformation. He retains most of his class and race-related attributes and skills, including a +1 bonus to hit with swords and bows, the ability to find hidden doors, the ability to wield two weapons, a +3 bonus to tracking checks, and a +4 bonus to hit his species enemy (orcs), but the elven prince has lost his animal empathy, the followers he once attracted, his ability to cast Priest spells, and all of his other clerical abilities, in addition to his sense of smell. His elven magic resistance has been superseded by a complete immunity to mind-related spells such as *charm, ESP, hold,* and *sleep*. His elven infravision has been superseded by the 90' infravision exhibited by all curst. In elven chainmail, his chance to Hide in Shadows is 56%, and his chance to Move Silently is 55%. Like all curst, Abadda benefits from *cure* spells but can only be slain by a *remove curse* spell. If "slain" by any other method, he regenerates 1 hit point per day. (The lingering aura of Myrkul accelerates this rate to 1 hit point per hour while Abadda remains within the temple.) If decapitated, the elven prince's body disintegrates into dust and a new body regenerates from the head (a process that takes twice as many days as the curst has hit points). Abadda cannot be turned.

Appearance: Abadda retains the build and bearing of a young noble elf, but his skin has paled to an unearthly white pallor. His eyes are dark pools. His hair is silky white. His face is hidden behind a skull mask he seized from the body of a Myrkulyte priest who drowned in the sinking of the temple.

Personality: Ere his transformation, Abadda was a charismatic green elf of noble bearing who was a shining example of the aspirations of Phalorm, the Realm of Three Crowns. While flashes of this personality remain, Abadda is now a tortured soul who seeks absolution and eternal rest. If Abadda is approached in a peaceful fashion and engaged in conversation, he may reveal fragments of his personal history as well as bits of lore from the Realm of Three Crowns. Abadda accedes to nearly any request for the promise of eternal rest. Unfortunately for his tortured soul, the fallen elf is unaware of what, if anything, can be done to end his centuries-old torment.

History: Abadda Moonglamaer was slain on the fields of Uthtower in the Year of the Lamia's Kiss (615 DR) and transformed into a curst by a magical eddy of the Curse of Iniarv. For three decades he wandered the Mere of Dead Men seeking an honorable death in battle, but time and again he rose anew to continue his undying existence. In the Year of Tormented Souls (646 DR), Chardansearavitriol captured Abadda, seeking the Unicorn Blade that the fallen Warrior-Priest had once borne. In exchange for the promise of eternal rest, Abadda agreed to lead the covetous wyrm to the Unicorn Blade. Once the blade had been added to his hoard, the Ebondeath betrayed the undying elf and imprisoned him in one of the unused burial alcoves in the Vaults of the Uthlords. The present location of the Unicorn Blade is unknown. It was removed from the Ebondeath's hoard by a Myrkulyte priest prior to the Uthtower's sinking and has not been seen since.

For centuries Abadda lay undying in his silent tomb until a priest of the Ebondeath Sect discovered the anomalous nature of his internment in the Year of Chains (1321 DR) and removed the burial plaque to see what lay within. Once released, the elven curst was an object of great interest to the Myrkulytes, for his undead form was unknown to them. One of their experiments involved a greater doppleganger consuming the curst's brain (which then regenerated). The doppleganger was then able to assume Abadda's identity, even though the elven prince had died long ago. A measure of the curst's dementia must have infected the greater doppleganger, for the false Abadda fled the temple and returned to the lands of the Fallen Kingdom where he became a proud wanderer and bandit leader. The false Abadda—who bore *Sush*, the legendary Silent Sword, at the time—was eventually challenged and slain by Distyl of Nesmé at the court of Alustriel, High Lady of Silverymoon, in the Year of the Wanderer (1338 DR), but none detected the doppleganger's ruse, even in death.

dragon's hoard, many such treasures were removed from the temple by fleeing priests as the Uthtower and the catacombs sunk into the Mere.

Chardansearavitriol's ascension transformed the dracolich into a disembodied spirit loosely tethered to his mortal remains. Whether this new form was a step forward or backward in Chardansearavitriol's pursuit of divinity is a question best left to sages such as Velsaert of Baldur's Gate. In any case, the Ebondeath now manifests within these chambers as a ghostly aura of terror that drifts among the sepulchers of the dead. This ghostly vestige first appears when the PCs enter area **27** (see below for details).

27. Crypt of the First Royals. The following description assumes that most or all of the water has filtered out of the room. The DM should adjust the description if the chamber is flooded when the PCs arrive:

> Stone steps climb to a vaulted, octagonal chamber thirty feet high at its peak. The room is dark, and the mosaic floor is littered with bones, bits of stone, and puddles of mud. Arched passages, each 30' wide, lead north, west, and south into darkness.
>
> As you reach the top of the stairs, a ghastly apparition appears in the middle of the room and unfolds its tattered wings. The terrible dragon reveals its bony frame, and its fleshless skull greets you with sharp spectral fangs and flaring red eyes.

Normally, Chardansearavitriol's spirit remains at rest. During the Eye of Myrkul, however, the former dracolich is capable of manifesting a spectral form similar to that of a ghost, attacking those who invade its lair. The ghost of the once fearsome dracolich appears whenever a living creature enters the chamber.

Anyone seeing the ghost must save vs. spell at a –4 penalty. PCs failing their saving throws age 10 years, drop whatever items they're carrying, and flee for 2d6 rounds. Priests above 6th level are immune to these effects, and other beings above 8th level suffer a –2 penalty to the saving throws (instead of –4). The *rings of Myrkul*

afford no protection against the ghost's aura of terror.

Chardansearavitriol's ghost snaps at intruders with its bony jaws as it hovers in the air. This attack inflicts no damage but ages the victim 10–40 (1d4 × 10) years. For the effects of aging, refer to Table 12 in the *DMG*.

The ghost cannot travel beyond areas **27–30** and does not possess the *magic jar* ability of most ghosts. Holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage per vial; a *dispel evil* or *raise dead* spell destroys the ghost instantly.

Ghost: INT high (13); AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 10; hp 54; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA age 10–40 years; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; silver weapons inflict half damage; immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear,* poison, paralysis, cold-based attacks, and death magic; SZ H; ML special; XP 6,000; *MM*/130 (variant).

Destroying this manifestation does not slay Chardansearavitriol, but the ghost cannot reform until the next time the Eye of Myrkul appears. A *dispel evil* spell banishes the spirit for 3d6 turns but does not destroy it.

This royal crypt is largely empty except for the bones of a few shattered skeletons lying about the room. Four 30'-wide, 15'-high arched hallways lead out along the cardinal points to the rest of the Royal Crypt chambers (areas **28–30**) and Vaults of the Uthlords (areas **20–26**).

Whereas the rest of the royals and nobles of the Mausoleum have burial niches carved lengthwise into the stone with a relatively small stone plaques covering their heads, the first two kings and first two queens of Uthtower have much grander tombs. King Uth I, his wife Queen Sarlani, King Ornoth I, and his wife Queen Mihath are each interred in one of the four walls. The body of each monarch was placed in a rectangular vault that was then sealed with *stone shape* spells made to resemble the recumbent profile of the deceased. If any of the tombs is disturbed, all four carved images step forth from their stony berths and attack as caryatid columns. The stone door sealing each tomb remains and can withstand 60 points of damage each before sundering; a *stone shape, transmute rock to mud*, or *dig* spell destroys a door automatically.

The four tombs are air-tight, their contents sealed against the ravages of submersion and time. King Uth I's tomb contains the monarch's bones, a platinum diadem set with lapis lazuli dragons (worth 4,200 gp) and a *rod of smiting* (15 charges). Queen Sarlani's crypt holds her bones and a bejeweled tiara (worth 5,000 gp). King Ornoth I's tomb contains his bones and a gold sceptre topped with an emerald *gem of insight* (worth 2,500 gp for the sceptre alone, 8,500 gp with the gem). Queen Mihath's crypt contains her bones, a *phylactery of long years*, and a beautiful gold necklace adorned with nine platinum teardrops (worth 580 gp).

Caryatid columns (4): INT non (0); AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 5; hp 22 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SD +4 bonus to saving throws; half damage from nonmagical weapons; normal damage only from magical weapons; SZ M (7' tall); ML 20; XP 420; *MM*/171 (golem, variant).

28. Crypt of Uthtower. The floor of this crypt is strewn with the bones of a few shattered skeletons. The walls are lined with 3'-high, 3'-wide, and 9'-deep niches stacked three-high along the walls.

Beginning with King Uth II, the bodies the monarchs and their royal consorts are interred in burial niches guarded by grandfather plaques. If the PCs break into the tombs, the DM should determine whether any treasure remains or whether it was removed via magic without disturbing the grandfather plaques.

29. Crypt of Yarlith. The following description assumes that most or all of the water has filtered out of the room. The DM should adjust the description if the chamber is flooded when the PCs arrive:

> The floor of this 30'-high octagonal room is slightly bowl-shaped, allowing mud to settle into it. A great heap of bones lies in the center of this shallow mud pool. Recognizable are the skeletons of several dozen humans as well as the bones of some great reptilian creature. Topping the 8'-tall mound is a fearsome, elongated skull with pointed horns and long, protruding fangs.
>
> Scattered among the bones are countless coins, treasures, and antiquities. Mounted on the back walls of the room are three rows of thirteen plaques—39 plaques in total. Two of them are sculpted in the shape of a human visage.

The walls of this crypt are lined with 3'-high, 3'-wide, and 9'-deep niches stacked three-high along the walls. Only King Ornoth II and his wife, Queen Sadiya of Eigersstor, were interred here, and their burial niches are guarded by grandfather plaques. The other 37 niches are empty, and the plaques covering them are featureless and inanimate.

If the PCs break into one or both of the tombs, it is left up to the DM to determine whether any treasure remains or if it was removed via magic without disturbing the grandfather plaques.

A great heap of bones lies in the center of the chamber, including two dozen complete human skeletons and the remains of Chardansearavitriol, topped by the Ebondeath's fearsome skull. Interspersed among the pile of bone are the remains of Chardansearavitriol's hoard, including approximately 18,000 cp, 16,000 sp, 8,000 gp, 2,400 ep, and 600 pp of widely varying mintage. The majority of coins were minted in Uthtower or Yarlith and, if sold in small quantities to widely scattered collectors, might fetch up to five times their face value. Scattered among the coins and bones are 21 gems and pieces of jewelry, including six garnets (worth 100 gp each), two onyxes fashioned into chess pieces (a king and a queen, worth 75 gp each), four pieces of uncut crown of silver (worth 10 gp), six pieces of tremair (worth 100 gp each) amid the rotted remains of a once stunning Waterdhavian debutante's gown, two aquamarines affixed to a silver armband once worn by an Uthgardt barbarian (worth 1,200 gp total), and one beljuril set in a mithral shoulder plate sized for a dwarf (worth 6,000 gp total). Three objects of art have survived the years of immersion, including an ornate Neverwintan water clock the size of a merchant's coffer (worth 500 gp), the shell of a giant abalone painted with a montage of scenes set in the aquatic elf city of Iumathiashae off

The bones and hoard of the dracolich Chardansearavitriol wait to be plundered.

the coast of Evermeet (worth 1,600 gp), and a dwarven runestone forged of darksteel (worth 3,000 gp). The last is engraved with the sign of the Ironstar clan on one side—a four-pointed white star gleaming atop a rugged black iron anvil—and Dethek runes on the other face that tell the tale of the death of King Daurvos Frostbeard at the Stone Bridge. Last but not least, there are five dweomered items: a *bone ring* with 82 charges, a *cloak of reflection*, a human-sized suit of *Laeral's storm armor*, the Twinned Crown of Uthtower (see the "New Magical Items" sidebar), and a *wand of obliteration* (18 charges) whose command word was lost long ago.

As the floor of the chamber is slightly bowl-shaped, the last foot of water never fully drains despite the work of the dwarven pumping system. The undead form of the last high priest of the Ebondeath Sect still stalks these dark waters, eternally defending the draconic entity it venerates. A skuz appears as a slimy coating on the water, similar to the algae growths on still ponds and lakes. A skuz can manipulate its slimy body, allowing it to take on humanoid and other forms and making it easier to attract prey. Although not an "item" per se, destroying the skuz saps the temple 1 deific point.

Skuz: INT exceptional (16); AL CE; AC 0; MV 1, swim 15; HD 11; hp 66; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6/2d6; SA energy drain, spells; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immunities (see below); MR 25%; SZ M (7' long); ML 20; XP 15,000; *MC11: FORGOTTEN REALMS Appendix*.

SA—Skuz attack by forming pseudo-arms from their slimy mass. In addition to causing physical damage, each touch of a skuz drains one life level from its victim. Skuz can use the following spell-like abilities at will, twice per day: *gaze reflection, suggestion, watery double, animate dead,* and *transmute dust to water*.

SD—Skuz are immune to all fire-based attacks and spells. Skuz can only be hit by +2 or better weapons and, because of their malleable body, suffer only half damage from magical edged weapons. The skuz is turned as "special" undead.

SW—*Lower water* causes 2d10 points of damage to a skuz, and *raise dead* instantly kills it.

Destroying Chardansearavitriol's bones is difficult, as Myrkul's ebbing power protects them from most forms of physical, psionic, or magical assault save *disintegrate* and *wish* spells, a *wand of obliteration*, or a *sphere of annihilation*. Removing the dracolich's skeletal remains saps the temple of 3 deific support points. (See "Myrkul's Ebbing Aura" section for details.)

Hauling Chardansearavitriol's bones out of the mausoleum requires 24 man-hours, assuming the PCs aren't delayed. (Thus, three people would require eight hours to remove the bones, four people would require six hours, and so forth.) PCs can save

time by using a *bag of holding* or similar item to transport the dracolich's remains. (Amalkyn the Black possesses just such an item.) Filling and transporting a 250-lb. *bag* requires 30 minutes, and there are approximately 3,000 lbs. of bones. The dracolich's skull is too large to fit into a *bag of holding* but fits inside a *portable hole*.

30. Wyrm's Parlor. This chamber served as the primary entrance into Chardansearavitriol's lair. When the room is entirely drained, a shallow brackish pool, once fed by a freshwater spring, forms in the northwest corner.

The roughly hewn tunnel to the south is completely blocked some 60 feet down. The original sinking of the Uthtower caused the tunnel to collapse, forever sealing this entrance and exit to the mausoleum.

Silt covers the floor. Buried under the muck are the skeletons of a dozen or more Myrkulytes who failed to escape before the closing off of the tunnel sealed their fate. A careful search of the room reveals a few badly rusted maces, scythes, and flails, but nothing of value.

Fall of the Uthtower

If the PCs have sufficiently weakened the temple's deific support, as discussed in the "Myrkul's Ebbing Aura" section, or if the PCs are still inside the temple when the first rays of dawn strike the tower, they might be forced to make a mad dash to escape as the Uthtower sinks beneath the murk. In any event, the temple begins to sink when one of three things occurs: there is a net loss of seven or more points of deific support or the first rays of dawn strike the Uthtower.

The actual re-flooding of the tower and catacombs below is slow, for the Uthtower's descent is much more stately than its rapid emergence. The only means of egress is the staircase of the Uthtower (area **6**). For at least the first ten minutes, the subterranean passages flood at the same rate as the pumps had been lowering the water level. However, when the waters of the Mere pour down the great staircase, the underground complex quickly floods. The timing of this event depends on which doors the PCs left closed on the first, second, and third levels of the Uthtower. For every additional level of the tower that is left in the same sealed state it was found, the PCs have an additional ten minutes to escape before the waters rush in. Anyone so unfortunate as to be trapped in the catacombs when the waters pour in sustains 1d6 points of damage per round every round they fail a Dexterity check. In addition, they lose 3d10 feet of progress measured from the base of the great staircase every round they fail a Strength check, and, if unable to breathe underwater, make normal Constitution checks to hold their breath (as detailed in the *Player's Handbook*).

Dealing With Voaraghamanthar

Depending the success of the PCs' mission, the return trip to Iniarv's Tower might involve a confrontation with the black dragons, the Followers of the Scaly Way, or both groups.

Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor's primary goals are to acquire the bones of Chardansearavitriol and the Twinned Crown of Uthtower without endangering themselves. Secondarily, they desire to maintain their decent relationship with the Cult of the Dragon cell in Leilon. Neither dragon is foolish enough to imagine that unnecessary killing of either the PCs or the Helmites is without consequence, for both groups could have powerful friends who would seek to avenge their deaths. Nevertheless, if the opportunity presents itself, the wyrms are prepared to eliminate any lesser creature who knows too much about their goals or tactics. As a result, depending on the actions of the PCs, the final encounter with one or both dragons could occur smoothly in an atmosphere of great tension or erupt in a great battle.

The goals of the Cult of the Dragon and their agents are simple. Both Amalkyn the Black and Helduth Flamespell set out to recover the bones and hoard of Chardansearavitriol. The Cult needs the bones to bring Chardansearavitriol back to life, ideally under the Cult's control. Unless badly beaten, Amalkyn and Helduth do not allow the PCs to run off with the "goods" and might even pursue them all the way to the ruins of Iniarv's Tower. If either bandit lord learns of Voaraghamanthar's deception, particularly the existence of not one but two black dragons, they withdraw and report back to their superiors in Leilon. If Voaraghamanthar has earned their personal ire, the Cultists might seek to ally with the PCs against the dragon.

Voaraghamanthar is lurking beneath the mere near the Uthtower, waiting for the PCs or the Followers of the Scaly Way to emerge with the Twinned Crown of Uthtower and the bones of Chardansearavitriol. The black wyrm rises from the murk to confront the PCs as they prepare to leave the vicinity of the Uthtower.

If the PCs retrieve either the crown or the bones, *but not both*, Voaraghamanthar demands that they recover the missing prize. If the Uthtower sinks back into the swamp and the PCs are unable to complete their task, Voaraghamanthar agrees to escort the PCs safely back to Iniarv's Tower and trade what they have for the lives of Sir Justin and the Helmite Priests.

If the PCs retrieve both the crown and the bones, Voaraghamanthar wants to ensure that these items are delivered safely back to Iniarv's Tower and agrees to escort the PCs safely through the swamp. The black wyrm refuses to take riders, although he does clear a safe path through the swamp and destroys anything that stands in the PCs' way.

If the Dragon Cultists obtain the crown, Voaraghamanthar demands it as payment for his services. They have little choice but to comply. If they obtain Chardansearavitriol's bones, Voaraghamanthar allows the Cultists to keep the bones until they reach Iniarv's Tower. At that time, Voaraghamanthar and his *invisible* brother Waervaerendor slay the Cultists, hide their remains (if any) in the swamp, and claim both the crown and Chardansearavitriol's bones for themselves. (The dragons are *Chaotic* Evil, after all.) They might even relay a message to the Cult of the Dragon cell in Leilon suggesting that their agents were murdered by a certain band of adventurers ...

New Wizard Spells

Acidosis (Alteration)
Level 1 (Wizard)
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M (V for dragons)
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: Special

This spell magically increases the acidity of blood, transforming the bodily liquid into a potent acid that can damage items and injure creatures that come into contact with the blood but are not immune to acid.

Any successful attack with a slashing or piercing weapon or equivalent natural weaponry against a being protected by *acidosis* draws blood of sufficient acidity to damage the attacker and/or his weapon. If a weapon is used in the attack, an item saving throw vs. acid is required. If the item saving throw is successful, the item is undamaged. If the item saving throw is failed, however, the weapon is destroyed. Whether or not a weapon is used, the creature that attacked the individual protected by *acidosis* must make a saving throw vs. poison. A successful saving throw means that no collateral damage results, but failure indicates that the attacker suffers 2d8 points of acid damage.

In addition, any attack that draws blood under the effects of *acidosis* has the potential to splatter the acidified blood in the general vicinity. Consult the rules for splash damage from grenadelike missiles in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* for details.

It should be noted that this spell has deadly consequences on the caster if he is not immune to acid at the time the spell is cast. Anyone so foolish as to cast this spell on themselves who is not immune to the effects of acid suffers 8d8 points of damage per round for the duration of the spell effect or until the spell is ended by magical means such as a *dispel magic* spell.

The material component of this spell is a drop of potent acid which is poured onto a open, bleeding wound (causing 1 point of damage in the process).

Skullshatter (Necromantic)
Level 2 (Wizard)
Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: 1 skull
Saving Throw: ½

When this spell is cast, the Wizard imbues a skull with a latent magical dweomer similar to that of a *magic mouth* spell. When a specified event occurs or if any damage is inflicted to the skull, the skull explodes. Any living, corporeal creature within a set radius of the triggered *skullshatter* effect suffers damage from the razor-sharp bone fragments. The amount of damage and radius of effect depend on the size of the creature whose skull is employed. A successful saving throw vs. spell reduces the damage by half (round down, to a minimum of 1).

Size	Damage	Radius
T	1d4	3 feet
S	1d6	6 feet
M	1d8	9 feet
L	1d10	12 feet
H	1d12	15 feet
G	1d20	18 feet

If another skull bearing a *skullshatter* enchantment is placed within the radius of effect, it can be set to be triggered by the explosion of the first *skullshatter* enchantment. Multiple skulls can be placed within range of each other or in deadly piles that explode with overlapping effects. The caster can place one skull plus one additional skull for every three levels of experience (two skulls at 4th-level, three skulls at 7th-level, etc.) so that they overlap and deliver compound damage. In addition, it is possible to employ *skullshatter* in conjunction with other magical effects such as *magic mouth*.

The material component of this spell is a complete skull (including jaw). Although the skull of any creature with a skeletal structure will suffice, humanoid skulls are most commonly employed.

Iniarv's Unseen Voice* (Alteration)
Level 4 (Wizard)
Range: 10 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 1 object
Saving Throw: None

This spell works in all ways like the 2nd-level Wizard spell *magic mouth* except as follows. When this spell is cast, the Wizard imbues the chosen object with an unseen voice that begins speaking its message when a specified event occurs. The unseen voice emanates from thin air above and behind the right or left shoulder of the being responsible for triggering its magic, provided he is within 30 yards of the object on which the spell was placed. If no being, either living or undead, is even indirectly responsible for triggering the spell's magic and within 30 yards, the unseen voice emanates from the immediate vicinity of the object on which the spell was placed. The message mimics the caster's voice at the time the message was recorded. Thus, it is possible by means of this spell to have the unseen voice utter a message ranging from that of a barely audible whisper heard only by the target of the unseen voice to a booming shout heard by all.

Unlike a *magic mouth* spell, *Iniarv's unseen voice* does not expend all its magic once its triggering conditions are met. Instead, the spell lies dormant and untriggerable until such time as another spell of any sort is cast within 30 yards of the focus of an expended *Iniarv's unseen voice*. When suitable magic is released, *Iniarv's unseen voice* steals its magical energy, causing the magic invoked to dissipate without effect, and is then rearmed until triggered again. Note that an *Iniarv's unseen voice* has no effect on any spell cast in its general vicinity while it is ready to trigger. *Iniarv's unseen voice* can rearm itself one time for every three levels of the caster (round down) before it is permanently discharged.

This spell can be used in conjunction with a *shout* spell.

The material components of this spell are a small bit of honeycomb as well as a pinch of powdered gemstone, either raindrop or woodtine, worth at least 50 gp.

* *Iniarv's unseen voice* spell designed by Ed Greenwood and Eric L. Boyd.

Return to Iniarv's Tower

The adventure comes to a relatively unscripted end amid the ruins of Iniarv's Tower. Ideally, the PCs return with the crown and the dracolich's bones and trade these items for the lives of Sir Justin and the priests of Helm. Voaraghamanthar flies off, promising to return shortly with the prisoners. This gives him the chance to confer with his brother and free Sir Justin from Waervaerendor's *portable hole*. Voaraghamanthar then returns to Iniarv's Tower with Sir Justin in his clutches and deposits the paladin in the courtyard, agreeing to release the priests of Helm once the heroes fulfill their end of the deal. Waervaerendor keeps his distance but watches invisibly as his brother concludes business with the heroes. If the PCs honor their end of the agreement, Voaraghamanthar honors his and brings the Priests of Helm up from the nearby swamp. (See "Where Have the Helmites Gone?" section for details.) He then places the dracolich's bones in Waervaerendor's *portable hole* for easy transport.

Sir Justin is deeply disturbed that the PCs would strike a deal with an evil dragon to free him and the priests of Helm from captivity. He is also upset if the PCs unearthed the bones of Chardansearavitriol, fearing that this deed could have serious repercussions throughout Faerûn, particularly if Voaraghamanthar is allowed to keep the bones! Despite his misgivings, Sir Justin does not provoke the dragon at this time, but he silently vows to make trouble for Voaraghamanthar in the future.

If the PCs are not forthcoming with the Twinned Crown of Uthtower or Chardansearavitriol's bones, Voaraghamanthar threatens the lives of Sir Justin and the Priests of Helm unless the PCs fulfill their end of the deal. If the PCs remain belligerent, Voaraghamanthar attacks them. Three rounds later, he is joined by his twin, Waervaerendor, who reveals his presence with a horrendous spray of acid after erupting from the swamp nearby. The dragons fight until one of them is reduced to half hit points, at which time they flee. If one dragon is slain, the other flies into a terrible rage and continues to fight until slain himself.

Other Developments

The exact unfolding of events depends upon the actions of the PCs and NPCs, as well as the DM's plans for further adventures. The latter is governed in large part by the DM's decisions concerning Chardansearavitriol's bones and the exact powers of the Twin Crowns of Myrmoran, and what influence, if any, Iniarv holds over the wearers of the crowns.

Voaraghamanthar's research concerning the dracolich suggests that Chardansearavitriol's spirit might be tied to his remains. Waervaerendor is skeptical—as befits his nature—but both dragons have gravely underestimated the danger of unearthing Chardansearavitriol's bones. Unknown to the black wyrms, Chardansearavitriol's spirit has the power to impress its will upon any dragon who comes into physical contact with the dracolich's remains. After they claim the dracolich's bones, Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor might hear Chardansearavitriol speaking to them from beyond the grave and feel strangely compelled to obey the dracolich's whisperings. Alternatively, Chardansearavitriol might have greater machinations in mind and hide his presence until such time as the PCs depart the scene.

If Iniarv still exists in some sentient form, his spirit might sense the presence of the Twinned Crowns of Myrmoran and use the *demand* power of the crowns to force the black dragons to do his bidding. Chardansearavitriol and Iniarv could vie for control of the black dragon twins. In this scenario, the PCs could be caught in the middle of a great conflagration as hostilities erupt between the two enraged dragons.

If the Cult of the Dragon obtains the bones, they begin searching for ways to bring the dracolich back to "life." Should this occur, all of Faerûn could face the terror of an ancient foe and once again learn to fear the name Chardansearavitriol.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs destroy Myrkul's lingering influence in the Mere of Dead Men, the number of undead active in the swamp diminishes to its previous level. The number of attacks along the High Road likewise diminishes, allowing trade to rebound in the region.

If the PCs won freedom for Sir Justin Melenikus and the other Helmites, they earn the gratitude of the church of Helm and the Lord's Alliance (as the allied cities of the North are known). However, if the PCs have allowed the draconic twins, the Cult of the Dragon, or the fallen Lord of Bones to increase in power and influence and this fact becomes widely known, they are vilified by the very people they sought to help. (The PCs could be revered by some folk and vilified by others if they rescued the Helmites at the expense of giving the black wyrms what they wanted.)

If the PCs succeed in rescuing Sir Justin and the Helmites, they should each receive a 10,000 XP story award. (The DM may reduce this reward by half if only Sir Justin was saved.) The DM may award an additional 5,000 XP if the PCs succeeded in thwarting the plans of the black dragon twins and their Cult of the Dragon allies.

Depending on how the events in this adventure play out, the PCs have a wide range of adventuring possibilities open to them:

❖ If Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor escape the final encounter unscathed, they might bear a grudge against the PCs. The dragon twins are willing to give up Chardansearavitriol's bones, but they want the Twinned Crowns of Myrmoran to enhance their collective power. If the PCs manage to hang on to the Twinned Crown of Uthtower, the dragons hunt them until the magical artifact is recovered.

❖ If Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor escape with both of the Twinned Crowns or, even worse, if both dragons fall under the sway of either Chardansearavitriol or Iniarv, the PCs might realize the evil they have set loose on the North and seek to hunt the twins down before they become untenable. Likewise, if Chardansearavitriol manifests once again as a dracolich (with the help of the Cult of the Dragon), with additional magical powers never before seen, the PCs might seek to destroy him before the Ebondeath can rebuild his base of power.

❖ The PCs have garnered some dangerous adversaries in the Cult of

New Magical Items

Ring of Myrkul
XP Value: 250 **GP Value:** 1,000
The *rings of Myrkul* were created and worn by Myrkulyte priests before the Time of Troubles. When Myrkul perished atop Blackstaff Tower in Waterdeep, his secret temple in the heart of the Mere sank into the swamp. A number of Myrkulytes fled the sunken temple and died, giving up their lives—and their magical rings—to the monstrous denizens of the Mere.

These gold bands painted black and adorned with the white skull of Myrkul glow faintly in the presence of a *detect evil* spell. The rings allowed the Myrkulytes to identify one another. More importantly, the rings served as keys, enabling the priests to enter their temple without incurring the wrath of many of its guardians.

Anyone wearing a *ring of Myrkul* has the ability to walk among the dead. All mindless undead and intelligent undead with fewer than 6 HD do not attack the ring's wearer unless the wearer attacks them first. Moreover, the wearer can cast *chill touch* 3/day and *ghoul touch* 1/day. Prior to the Time of Troubles, if the ring wearer was a Myrkulyte priest, he could invoke a number of other effects, but these greater necromantic powers vanished when Myrkul died.

The most important power of the *rings of Myrkul*, not previously revealed, is the ability of three such magical bands, in conjunction with the manifestation of the Eye of Myrkul, to raise the Uthtower and its catacombs from the dark waters of the Mere, assuming each *ring of Myrkul* is borne by a sentient, living being within five miles of the Uthtower. In advance of performing such a function, each *ring of Myrkul* guides its bearer in the general direction of the Uthtower in the month leading up to the appearance of the Eye of Myrkul. This power manifests only if concentrated upon, and its accuracy increases as the power of Myrkul waxes anew.

Within Myrkul's temple in the Mere of Dead Men, several additional powers do still accrue to the wearer of a *ring of Myrkul*. The wearer of the ring can issue simple commands to any animated skeleton or zombie within sight, although using this power should be considered an evil act. Moreover, the magic of the ring in conjunction with the temple's unholy aura amplifies the *chill touch* and *ghoul touch* powers to 9/day and 6/day each, as well conferring the powers of *vampiric touch* 3/day and *finger of death* 1/day. The active use of such powers—not including the passive use of the walk among the dead power—is not without penalty. Every 10 levels of spell energy employed by a *ring of Myrkul* within the confines of the Uthtower or the Mausoleum of the Ebondeath increases the deific support of the temple by 1 point, as discussed in the "Myrkul's Ebbing Aura" section) and weakens the ring wearer by 1 hp permanently upon the passing of the Eye of Myrkul.

Several *rings of Myrkul* lost in the swamp have since been found. Evil, intelligent creatures are drawn to the rings as if by the 8th-level *sympathy* spell (range 30 yards). Amalkyn the Black and Helduth Flamespell, two of the many villains in this adventure, wear *rings of Myrkul* they found in two separate encounters with undead emerging from the Mere of Dead Men. A third *ring of Myrkul* may be found in a cairn deep in the Mere.

Twin Crowns of Myrmoran
XP Value: 6,000 **GP Value:** 24,000
The Twin Crowns of Myrmoran were created by Iniarv, the Mage Royal of Uthtower, in the Year of Broken Lands (191 DR) at the request of the Council of Lords of Uthtower. Upon the sudden death of King Ornoth I and the decision to split the realm into two kingdoms for his twin sons, the archmage was commissioned to fashion identical crowns for the two branches of the Royal House of Myrmoran, known individually as the Twinned Crown of Yarlith and the Twinned Crown of Uthtower.

Iniarv enchanted powerful protections into the Twin Crowns. Unknown to the rulers or subjects of either realm, however, the Mage Royal entwined additional enchantments into the royal headgear to serve his own aims. The archmage had established his abode on the western slopes of the Sword Mountains near the end of the reign of Uthtower's first king, attracted by the solitary lifestyle he could establish there and relative peacefulness of the area. Iniarv won the confidence of Uthtower's second monarch and the title of Mage Royal to ensure the title would not fall to a rival wizard but otherwise cared little for the politics of the tiny realm. When the fledgling kingdom threatened to dissolve into civil strife, Iniarv worked behind the scenes to ensure that an amicable truce would be achieved so as to pursue his studies of the Art without disruption. Toward this end, Iniarv wove enchantments into the Twin Crowns that would both ensure a harmonious relationship between their two bearers and allow Iniarv to exercise a measure of control over both crown bearers if he was forced by events to intervene once again.

Individually, each of the Twin Crowns of Myrmoran provides it bearer numerous magical protections when worn. Such defenses include a +3 bonus to Armor Class and all saving throws, the protection of a *mind blank* spell, as well as immunity to all psionics, spells from the school of enchantment/charm, spells from the sphere of charm, or spell-like magical effects duplicating them. In addition, the bearer can cast *shield, mirror image, fire shield, ironguard,* and *teleport without error* once per day each.

When the Twinned Crown of Uthtower and the Twinned Crown of Yarlith are worn at the same time by separate individuals, an empathic link is formed between the bearers that allows them to sense the emotional state of each other at any time and communicate via telepathy once per week as long as both are on the same plane. When both crowns are worn by identical twins on the same plane of existence, the regalia's full powers come to fruition. The two bearers become linked in mind and soul while wearing the Twinned Crowns, to the point where they become almost a single sentience. The twin crown-bearers can communicate at will over any distance, and either twin can reach into the other's mind and cast spells their counterpart has memorized or regained, activate magical items triggered by silent act of will in the hands of the other twin, or even cast spells on their own form and have them affect the other twin instead.

The most obvious effect of these powers is to draw the crown bearers into a nearly unshakable friendship for as long as both continue to wear their crown. In most cases where the crown-bearers have radically different ethos, the weaker personality undergoes an alignment shift to that of the stronger personality. In the case of identical twins, the mental link forged by the Twinned Crowns fuse the bearers' identities to the point where they almost become one. Over time, it becomes progressively more difficult for either crown bearer to remove his regalia, to the point, after many years, that neither crown-bearer can live for any length of time without the magically-enhanced empathic bond.

Despite the risks entailed by protracted bearing of the Twinned Crowns, an even more dangerous evil lurks behind the strength forged by the bearers' bond. Iniarv wove into them the power for a third individual to dominate both by means of a *demand* spell employable at will on either or both wearers, assuming they are on the same plane of existence.

It is unclear whether Iniarv survives and could (or even would) exercise mastery over any individual or duo who recover the long-lost Twinned Crowns of Myrmoran. Even if Iniarv is no more, it is unclear whether Iniarv linked this power to his own sentience or manipulated the monarchs of the Twilit Land via some third magical device that others might employ. As such, it is still risky to employ the magic of the Twinned Crowns, no matter how tempting the powers might be.

the Dragon. Further adventures might include investigating the activities of the Cult cell in Leilon and thwarting further plots by the Followers of the Scaly Way.

❖ The crypts beneath Iniarv's Tower have lured more than one band of adventurers to their doom. The PCs might chose to follow in the footsteps of the Company of the Howling Wolf and discover whether the demilich still exists amid the remains of his fabled spell libraries.

❖ The PCs might wonder at the activities of the yuan-ti in the region and be drawn into further plots involving allies of Esau Enoch (from "Slave Vats of the Yuan-ti" in Issue #69) and Amalkyn the Black.

❖ The PCs could become involved in the Arcane Brotherhood's hunt for Helduth Flamespell, when agents of the Overwizard of the North come looking for the renegade.

❖ The PCs could search the Mere of Dead Men for the Unicorn Blade, the famed sword of Prince Abadda Moonglamaer. The weapon, which was taken from Chardansearavitriol's hoard during the fall of Uthtower by a Myrkulyte Priest, might lie beneath some haunted cairn, in the hollow of a hangman tree, or in the clutches of some other denizen of the Mere. Heroes who visit the mystic pool first encountered in "Dreadful Vestiges" (Issue #71) might receive a vision of the sword's location and launch an expedition to recover it. Ω

Lord of Iniarv's Tower

Sir Justin Melenikus, male human Pa9 (Helm): AL LG; AC 0 (*plate mail +3*); MV 12; hp 53; THAC0 12 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type (1d10+8 with *gauntlets of ogre power, two-handed sword +2*); SA spell use; SD detect evil intent (60' range), immune to disease, *cure disease* twice/peak, heal 18 hp/day; Str 16 (18/00 with *gauntlets of ogre power*), Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 18; SZ M (6'4" tall); ML 18.

Sir Justin speaks Common, as well as auld wyrmish, dwarvish, lizard man, and orc. His weapon proficiencies include Blades, Clubbing Weapons, and Lances. His nonweapon proficiencies include Etiquette, Heraldry, Land-based Riding (horses), Local History (Waterdeep and the North), Reading/Writing (Common), and Religion (Faerûnian). Sir Justin venerates Helm the Watcher.

Priest Spell: *Bless.*

Magical Items: Sir Justin is garbed in a gleaming suit of *platemail +3*, coupled with *gauntlets of ogre power* adorned with the symbol of Helm. He bears Illuminus, a *two-handed sword +2, +4 vs. undead* that glows with a soft, pure, white light (equivalent to torchlight) when mentally commanded by the bearer.

Appearance: Sir Justin stands nearly half a head above most of his peers, and his broad, muscled shoulders look strong enough to bear a full-grown dragon on his back. The knight keeps his dark brown hair and muttonchop sideburns closely cropped, and his piercing steel grey eyes reveal his inner strength. Melenikus is rarely out of his armor, and he keeps his two-handed sword strapped to his back at all times.

Personality: Sir Justin is a powerful and imposing figure who speaks with the authority of years of command. He is unflinchingly honest and expects the best of himself and others. Sir Justin treats both allies and enemies with courtesy and respect but does not allow himself to be played the fool. Melenikus does not tolerate cruelty in any form or to any degree. Although he bound by the same code of honor as all Paladins, the knight is careful not to allow adherence to the letter of the law to blind him to the principles of justice and preparedness in the long run.

History: Justin was raised on an farm outside of Waterdeep until his sixteenth year, when most of his family was slain by raiding orcs near the end of a long, bitter winter. Justin survived by chance—left for dead after being knocked unconscious. Vowing to never again be unprepared, he made his way to Helm's Hold, a fortified monastery dedicated to the god of guardians located some 20 miles southeast of the City of Skilled Hands. Years of hard work in the fields gave the would-be knight strong muscles and an indomitable spirit, and Justin found his calling as a paladin of Helm. In the years since his investiture, Sir Justin has been a strong force for the rule of law and the dispensation of mercy, working with the small and isolated communities of the Twilit Land in their struggles against the dangers of the Savage Frontier. The knight's most recent efforts have been directed towards ending the threat to trade and travel along the High Road in the vicinity of the Mere of Dead Men. His zeal for this worthy task is increased by the economic suffering now being felt in the communities north of Leilon that are largely cut off from their lucrative southern markets.

Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
YOU TRADED THE BONES AND THE CROWN TO TWO EVIL DRAGONS FOR ME?! NOW THEY'RE EVEN MORE POWERFUL THANKS TO YOU IDIOTS!
BUT WE DID IT TO SAVE YOU, JUSTIN.
ONE MAN'S LIFE MEANS NOTHING COMPARED TO ALL THE LIVES THAT WILL BE LOST TO THOSE SERPENTS! YOU'VE CONDEMNED UNTOLD INNOCENTS TO DEATH! HOW COULD YOU BE SO UTTERLY STUPID?!
HEY! HE MADE PIFFANY CRY!!
GET HIM!
EXCUSE ME, BUT WHY ARE YOUR FRIENDS ATTEMPTING TO SHOVE LORD JUSTIN'S HEAD INTO HIS SCABBARD?
PROBABLY BECAUSE HIS TUSH WOULDN'T FIT.

SIDE TREKS

BY JASON DUKE

Artwork by Steve Bryant

"The Necromancer's Pet" is an AD&D® Side Trek adventure designed for 4–6 characters of levels 4–6 (about 25 total levels). It can take place along any stretch of road that runs through a forest. For more information on the pseudo-familiar, the DM should refer to the *RAVENLOFT® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix III (Creatures of Darkness)* accessory, although this product is not required to run this adventure.

The party should possess at least two +1 magical weapons capable of hurting the loup-garous in the initial encounter. If the party does not have weapons capable of harming the pseudo-familiar, there are other ways to deal with it.

Lycanthrope Attack

As the PCs are traveling along the road, they encounter a pack of three loup-garous looming over the body of a bulldog. Two of the loup-garous are in wolf form; the third has assumed hybrid form and clutches a flickering, fanglike shortsword. The creatures turn to attack the party, escaping into the woods once reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, using their superior speed to put some distance between them and any pursuers.

Loup-garous (3): INT high (14); AL CE; AC 4; MV 12 (human form), 15 (hybrid form), or 18 (wolf form); HD 5+4; hp 32, 29, 25; THACO 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4/2d4 (hybrid form), 2d4 (wolf form), or by weapon type (human form); SA surprise; SD only hit by +1 or silver weapons; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14; XP 2,000; *RAVENLOFT MC Appendix III*/79.

The loup-garous are unable to harm the bulldog pseudo-familiar with their teeth and claws, as the pseudo-familiar requires +2 or better weapons to hit, but the 32-hp loup-garou is armed with a *shortsword +2,*

THE NECROMANCER'S PET

+4 vs. paladins capable of inflicting terrible wounds. The sword, named *Foolslayer*, is a Chaotic Evil weapon (INT 12; Ego 15; bestows *protection from good* upon its wielder up to three times/day). In the hands of a Good-aligned character, the sword is unearthly cold to the touch but inflicts no damage.

The bulldog appears near death. If approached within five feet, its eyes suddenly pop open, and it whimpers in pain. The DM should do his or her best to allay the PCs' suspicions by referring to the dog as "gentle," "helpless," and "abiding." Once it becomes aware of the PCs, the bulldog uses the *lifeline* power of its collar to establish a link with one of the PCs. That character is entitled to a saving throw, but the DM should make the save in secrecy to prevent the PCs from growing too suspicious. If the PC saves and the *lifeline* is not established, the dog tries again in another turn. If the PC fails his save, he automatically sustains half of all damage inflicted upon the dog for as long as the spell persists. (See "The Familiar Collar" sidebar for details.)

The Wounded Hound

Read or paraphrase the following text if a concerned PC approaches the wounded animal:

> Languishing in a puddle of blood is the badly mauled bulldog. Gaping wounds cover its wrinkly skin, and bloody drool oozes from its flabby cheeks and mouth. It snorts and grunts helplessly, its fat, pudgy face looking up with desperate, glassy eyes. It almost appears to plead for help.

Fitted around the bulldog's neck is a thin metal collar etched with strange characters. A *read magic* spell enables the caster to read them. The letters form the word "Fang," the dog's name. (See "The Familiar Collar" sidebar for details.)

The bulldog was accompanying its master—an evil Necromancer—along a path not far from the road when they were beset by the pack of loup-garous in wolf form. Before the Necromancer could draw his dagger or ready a spell, the hungry beasts pounced, and he was quickly ripped apart. His pet escaped into the woods but couldn't outrun the lycanthropes. After a brief confrontation on the road, it lay near death.

Bulldog (pseudo-familiar): INT high (14); AL NE; AC 6 (4 with collar); MV 12; HD 3+2; hp 2 (20 at full); THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4+2; SA vampiric regeneration; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; SZ S; ML 12; XP 975; *RAVENLOFT MC Appendix III*/34.

If the PCs take the bulldog into their care, it begins using its power of *vampiric regeneration*. Similar to the spell *vampiric touch*, this power enables the dog to drain 2 points per round from wounded PCs, and 2 points per hour from sleeping PCs. Its eyes glow an eerie purple light when it uses this power—a clue to the PCs that this is no ordinary hound.

As the DM, you should keep a secret account of the PCs' hit points throughout the adventure, but do not inform them of the loss. The dog attempts to drain from those who were wounded in the encounter with the loup-garous, draining those who were not wounded as an alternative.

Due to the severed link between the Necromancer and his pet, the pseudo-familiar loses 1 hp/day. Fortunately, now that the PCs are around to satiate its appetite, it should remain well fed.

The First Night

The bulldog waits to use its *vampiric regeneration* until after the PCs have bedded down for the night. If the party chooses to post a watch, take any awake PCs aside and have them roll Constitution checks for each hour they wish to remain awake (with an accumulative –1 penalty). Once a roll is failed, read the description below.

The Familiar Collar

The Necromancer infused this metal band with his dark magic to ensure his pet's protection. This collar, while not especially attractive, enables the bulldog (or wearer) to use the following spell-like powers:

❖ Cast a variation of the spell *spirit armor*. This effect lowers the wearer's AC to 4 and grants a +3 bonus to saves vs. magical attacks. The duration is permanent as long as the collar is worn, and no damage is sustained when the collar is removed (see *Tome of Magic*, page 26). However, removing the collar dispels the *spirit armor* at once.

❖ Cast *feign death* at will. The familiar uses this power if the PCs discover its true nature and it can't defeat them in combat.

❖ Cast *lifeline* once/turn, at 9th-level. Once a link is established with another living creature, the wearer can automatically transfer half of all damage it sustains to the other creature. Thus, if the wearer sustains 13 points of damage from an attack, half of those points (7, rounded up) are taken from the creature sharing the *lifeline* spell. The link between the wearer and the target creature is permanent as long as they remain within one mile of each other, or until a *dispel magic* is cast (either upon the collar or the target creature) or the collar is removed. The target creature can also find temporary protection inside a *minor globe of invulnerability*, and the *lifeline* spell is severed instantly if the collar or the target creature enters or is touched by an *antimagic shell*.

Only one power can be used at a time, with an initiative modifier of +1. The collar is also highly resistant to magic, saving against such attacks at +3. Because of its necromantic properties, each time it is used by anyone other than the bulldog, a RAVENLOFT powers check must be rolled.

New Magical Spell

Lifeline (Necromancy)
Level: 4
Range: 10 feet/caster level
Duration: See below
Area of Effect: One living creature
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell enables the caster to establish an invisible link with another living creature within 10 feet/caster level. Once the link is established, the *lifeline* spell persists for as long as the caster and the target creature remain within one mile of each other.

If the distance between the spellcaster and the target creature exceeds one mile, the *lifeline* is instantly severed. The duration is otherwise permanent until dispelled by the caster. A *dispel magic* otherwise has no effect on a *lifeline* spell, although an *antimagic shell* or *limited wish* spell destroys the link. Any *globe of invulnerability* spell protects a target creature from the *lifeline* spell for as long as the *globe* persists, but the link is not actually severed. If the target moves outside the radius of the *globe of invulnerability*, the *lifeline* is immediately reestablished.

So long as the *lifeline* remains in effect, half of any damage inflicted upon the caster is displaced to the target creature; in the case where the damage cannot be split evenly, the target creature takes the brunt of the attack. Thus, if the caster sustained 9 points of damage from an attack, the caster would actually sustain 4 points of damage, and 5 points of damage would be suffered by the target creature. The spell's effect extends only from the caster to the target creature, not vice versa. The target creature cannot displace damage back to the caster; however, if the target creature has its own *lifeline* spell in effect, it can transfer half of the damage it sustains to someone else.

A caster can have no more than one *lifeline* spell active at any given time. The material components for this spell are three drops of the caster's blood.

You slip into a deep, uncomfortable sleep. You try to resist, but your struggle is futile. As your eyes slowly close, you witness a disturbing sight as the eyes of the bulldog flare to life with an eerie, purple glow! You awaken suddenly, drenched in sweat, as if only a few moments have passed, but you quickly realize that you have been asleep for hours. Frantically, you glance about. The bulldog sits at the edge of the camp, vigilantly guarding the area against intruders. It does not seem disturbed or troubled by your startled reaction.

The first night, the bulldog drains a total of 10 hp from the PCs. They are plagued with horrible nightmares and visions of death during the course of their sleep. Some dream of wolves chasing them through the woods, while others dream of being trapped within a thick, unending mist. Purple glowing eyes stare at them from the mist. If using the rules presented in the *Nightmare Lands* boxed set, then treat this as a vivid nightmare.

The following day, the PCs awaken after their lousy night's sleep. Their bodies ache, and their heads throb. Anyone wounded in the encounter with the wolves must make an Intelligence check to notice their wounds have not healed, but instead have gotten worse.

The bulldog seems much healthier after the night's sleep. If a character attempts to clean, heal, or otherwise touch the animal, it growls viciously, barking and snapping.

The Second Night

The second night, the bulldog drains the remaining 8 hp it requires to fully heal itself. If the PCs remain awake or post more than one guard, have them roll Constitution checks as mentioned above. Once they are all asleep, the bulldog continues with its bloodfeast.

The PCs awaken later to discover the fully healed bulldog with an evil gleam in its eyes. The dog does not attack the PCs except in self-defense, but it does remain with the heroes to benefit from its *lifeline* ability. If attacked and seriously wounded, the hound uses the collar's *feign death* ability to appear dead; then, when the PCs leave, it awakens and stalks them from a distance, continuing to take advantage of its *vampiric regeneration* power and the collar's *lifeline* ability. If the collar is removed while the dog is under the effects of the *feign death*, it awakens instantly and fights until slain.

Once the PCs have defeated the bulldog, the adventure is over. Award them the XPs for defeating the bulldog, in addition to the XPs for any slain loup-garous. Also award another 500-XP story award to each PC for successfully surviving the encounter.

Tying Up Loose Ends

By following the tracks of the loup-garous, the PCs can locate the corpse of the Necromancer. Although most of his possessions were scattered about when he met his grisly demise, some remain on his person. He has a sheathed silver dagger and a *ring of protection +2*.

His spellbook is badly torn and smeared with blood. Only three spells remain legible: *animate dead, contagion,* and *lifeline*. In the Demiplane of Dread, casting any of these spells requires a powers check; the *lifeline* spell is detailed in adjacent sidebar.

A small pouch tucked into his robes has been ripped open, spilling the contents. Glittering coins cover the ground, totalling 40 sp, 27 ep, and 9 gp.

As a future adventure, the Necromancer could rise as a spectre bent on finding its pet (or collar). Unlike most spectres that haunt desolate places, the Necromancer's spectre is free to roam, but only at night. It stops at nothing to reach its familiar, disposing of any living thing that crosses its path!

Spectre: INT high (14); AL LE; AC 2; MV 15, fly 30 (B); HD 7+3; hp 33; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA energy drain; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; impervious to poison, paralysis, death magic, and cold-based spells; MR immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML 15; XP 3,000; *MM*/323. Ω

Take a wild ride to the Wild Coast.

THE SETTING SUN

BY ANDY MILLER

Bad things come in threes

Artwork & Cartography by Stephen Daniele

This is Andy's third appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures. *He proudly says that Oerth is his favorite game world and hopes that the villains in this adventure challenge even the most experienced players.*

"The Setting Sun" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–6 Good-aligned PCs of levels 5–7 (about 35 total levels). A well balanced party is recommended, and a Priest is helpful. PCs should also possess several magical items, including a few magical weapons.

The adventure is primarily set in Newtemple on the Wild Coast (hex F4-96 on the *From the Ashes* boxed set maps) in the GREYHAWK® campaign setting. The action begins in the spring or summer of 585 CY, after the Greyhawk Wars and six years before the present-day campaign as detailed in *The Adventure Begins* campaign book (TSR #9577) and *The Player's Guide to Greyhawk* (TSR #9578). With little modification, this adventure can be shifted to the current year (591 CY). Despite skirmishes between the settlers of the Wild Coast and invading forces from the Orcish Empire of the Pomarj, Newtemple and the surrounding area haven't changed much due to the sinister influence of Newtemple's present inhabitants.

DMs should have ready access to the *Wizard's Spell Compendium* and the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*™ tomes. DMs with the old *GREYHAWK Adventures* hardbound book might also find that reference useful, but it is not required to run the adventure.

For the Players

The PCs have come to the city of Greyhawk for reasons determined by the DM. They might be residents of the city or refugees from a war-torn land. They might even have come to the city to raise a fellow adventurer from the dead.

The PCs are summoned to the Temple of Pelor (the greater god of sun, light, strength, and healing). There, they gain an audience with a tall, dark-haired man wearing yellow robes with gold trim, an amulet of a blazing sun prominent on his chest. He introduces himself as Hathaniss, one of the Priests of the temple, and states the following:

"My friends, let me come to the point. The temple of Pelor needs your help to solve a puzzle. As you might know, humanoids from the Pomarj have turned the Wild Coast into a battleground. Although the City of Greyhawk and its allies have kept the forces of Turrosh Mak from advancing farther northward, much of the Wild Coast is overrun with evil humanoids.

"What you might not know is that one small bastion of good still exists. According to several refugees who fled the region, the district of Newtemple, located deep inside disputed territory, has not fallen. For some reason, the humanoids have avoided it. The people are still free of the tyranny of the orcs, although they are cut off from the rest of the civilized world.

"Newtemple is neither large nor well defended. It consists mostly of craftsmen, not warriors. They don't even have a walled town or fortress. The nearest town is Broken Wagon, fifteen miles north, but that has since fallen to the invading armies. Our temple there holds barely a handful of priests, yet the orcs have all but avoided it. We want to know why. We're asking you to go behind enemy lines to Newtemple. Once you reach the parish, consult with the priests of Pelor there and discover what is protecting the place. Return and inform us."

Hathaniss offers the PCs their choice of 5,000 gp or a favor from the church of Pelor in Greyhawk (such as a *resurrection* or *raise dead* spell). If the PCs complete the mission to repay the church for resurrecting or raising one of their comrades (or some other service), Hathaniss casts a *quest* spell on the beneficiary of that initial favor to ensure the task's completion.

If players ask Hathaniss why a *divination* or *commune* spell wasn't used to uncover Newtemple's secret, Hathaniss reluctantly admits that those spells are beyond the power of the Priests. (Specialty Priests of Pelor have access to the spheres of All, Charm, Creation, Elemental (Air), Guardian, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, Summoning, Sun, and Wards, but not Divination.) Secret inquiries made by other Priests have yielded only vague information—namely that all is not what it seems.

When the PCs agree to accept the mission, Hathaniss gives them a gold-embossed letter signed by Sarana, the High Priestess of Pelor in Greyhawk. The letter states that the bearer is a representative of the church and should be treated as such by the Priests in Newtemple.

For the Dungeon Master

The district of Newtemple takes its name from a temple that stands near the low cliffs of Woolly Bay. The temple was built centuries ago by cultists of Trithereon and later abandoned, whereupon it fell to ruin. In 480 CY, a group of Priests arrived to spread the teachings of Pelor. It wasn't long before the locals were helping the Priests rebuild the ruined temple. Within six months, Pelor's priesthood had a congregation. The old temple had been rebuilt, and its new priesthood held weekly masses to praise the glory of the sun god.

In 583 CY, the temple of Pelor was infiltrated by three rakshasas who came from the Pomarj to explore the old temple ruins. They believe the original temple—the ruins upon which the current Temple of Pelor stands—was the site of an ancient rakshasan cult. The rakshasas slew the Priests one night and began searching for an artifact they thought would extend their own god's power in the world. They disguised themselves as the slain Priests of Pelor and used their magic to *charm* and deceive the local populace, going so far as to kidnap handfuls of locals to gradually and discretely excavate the catacombs beneath the temple in secret search of the artifact.

In 583 CY, two of the rakshasas grew careless, killing and kidnapping locals less discriminately. Stories reached the Priests in the City of Greyhawk, and they sent a group of adventurers to the area to find out what was preying on the people there. The rakshasas tricked them into thinking they'd killed the real threat to the area: a huge, tentacled monster that had made its lair under an old bridge in the woods. The rakshasas, in their priestly guises, had learned about the creature (a froghemoth) from local woodsmen.

Nowadays, the rakshasas restrict their feasting to travelers, leaving the indigenous population alone. This proved more difficult after the invasion of the Wild Coast by humanoids in 584 CY, but the rakshasas dealt with the problem by taking large groups of refugees into their temple, claiming they were hiding them in the catacombs beneath the temple until they could be smuggled out via ship. These poor prisoners never saw the light of day again.

Now the rakshasas protect the entire area from the humanoids of the Pomarj, using their powers to frighten away or slay any humanoids who dare settle in the Newtemple area. The humanoids, unable to harm the rakshasas with their spells and nonmagical weapons, believe that Newtemple is cursed and avoid it.

Though they have not yet found the artifact, the rakshasas are convinced it must lie somewhere beneath the temple. (In their arrogance, they refuse to believe it could lie elsewhere). They are unprepared for the PCs' arrival but quickly rise to the situation.

Getting To Newtemple

Traveling overland to the Wild Coast is a dangerous proposition, so the temple of Pelor in Greyhawk City has arranged a ship to take the PCs south: the *Averesti Moira*, a caravel out of the Principality of Ulek commanded by an elf named Captain Tarvannisha.

Of all seagoing vessels, the caravel is among the safest and most reliable. The *Averesti Moira* is 70 feet long with a beam of 20 feet and sports two masts, with castles to the fore and aft. She is mounted with two ballistas on the stern castle and two on the forecastle. The caravel has a crew of 30 sailors, all dedicated to fighting the warships of the Pomarj. The crew consists of 25 humans and five elves.

PCs boarding the *Averesti Moira* note a strong, peculiar odor emanating from below deck. PCs who investigate find ten griffons in the main hold. The griffons are accustomed to sea travel and wait patiently until needed.

The trip is uneventful, though the DM is free to add some seaborne encounters. Two days out of the City

The Villains

The rakshasas all share the following characteristics:

Rakshasa: INT very (12); AL LE; AC –4; MV 15; HD 7; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/2–5; SA illusion, spells; SD +1 or better magical weapons to hit; MR immune to spells of less than 8th-level; SZ M; ML 16; XP 3,000; *MM*/299.

Rakshasas cast their spells at 7th-level ability and are immune to all spells lower than 8th-level (including *ESP* or *detect lie* spells). Magical items must be at least +1 to harm the rakshasas, but those of less than +3 inflict only half damage. A hit by a *blessed* crossbow bolt kills a rakshasa instantly. Their innate *ESP* allows them to read PCs' minds at will, though intelligent and wary PCs are allowed a saving throw vs. spell to resist having their deeper thoughts probed.

Alladus: hp 31; *wand of fireballs* with 46 charges (*EM*/1481), keys to all locked doors in the temple, rich yellow robes with gold trim.

Wizard Spells: 1st—*alarm* (cast in area **24A**), *color spray, magic missile*; 2nd—*invisibility, improved phantasmal force, web*; 3rd—*fly, hold person*.

Priest Spells: 1st—*cure light wounds* (×2), *sanctuary*.

Alladus appears as the chief priest of Newtemple—a tall man of about 40 with dark but graying hair and very dark eyes. He is clean shaven and wears yellow robes with gold trim. Secreted in the sleeve of his robe is his *wand of fireballs*. The wand is a burnt piece of wood with a blood red ruby set in one end. The command words for the wand are "flames take you." Alladus and the other rakshasas are unharmed if caught in the blast of one of Alladus' *fireballs* due to their immunity to spell effects of less than 8th-level.

Alladus's actual appearance is that of a large tiger, standing some seven feet tall on its hind legs and weighing at least 300 pounds. His sharp claws curve backward away from his palms.

Harthuul: hp 29; rich yellow robes with gold trim.

Wizard Spells: 1st—*alarm* (cast in area **24A**), *charm person* (×2), *magic missile*; 2nd—*hypnotic pattern, improved phantasmal force, invisibility*; 3rd—*fly, spectral force*.

Priest Spells: 1st—*cure light wounds* (×3).

Harthuul disguises himself as a middle-aged man of about 30 with blonde hair and blue eyes. He is quick to make jokes, but never at someone else's expense.

His true appearance is that of a grotesque ape with a fat, bloated belly. His claws curve backward away from his palms, and he drools excessively.

Killian: hp 20; rich yellow robes with gold trim.

Wizard Spells: 1st—*alarm* (cast in area **24A**), *burning hands, color spray, magic missile*; 2nd—*invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, stinking cloud*; 3rd—*lightning bolt, vampiric touch*.

Priest Spells: 1st—*command, cure light wounds, faerie fire*.

Killian's human form is that of a young man of about 20 with brown hair and eyes. He plays up his innocence and naivete and might even fake a lover's crush on one of the women in the PC party (especially if she thinks herself particularly attractive).

His true form is that of a creature as large as the other two. His head resembles a fish more than anything else, and he has a large, distended belly. He has the typical backward claws of all rakshasas.

of Greyhawk, the Temple of Pelor in Newtemple is sighted atop the cliffs of the Wild Coast. By noon, the ship is less than a mile off shore. Tarvannisha tells the PCs that she intends to remain hidden off the coast. When the PCs wish to be retrieved, they must signal with a red cloth. If she receives no signal after a week, the *Averesti Moira* sails north again.

The sheer cliffs range in height from 20 to 100 feet, stretching for miles in either direction. The cliffs form a natural defense from pirates and sea monsters.

There are enough griffon mounts for the entire party with an extra one for Tarvannisha. She bids the PCs to mount up and urges her griffon to flight, launching from the sterncastle.

The griffons are well trained, and Riding—Airborne proficiency checks are not required unless the rider attempts a special maneuver.

Tarvannisha leads the PCs to the top of the cliffs, not far from the temple. She then bids the PCs good luck and returns to her ship, the riderless griffons following behind. The ship itself sails out of sight, hiding near the island east of the temple.

Captain Tarvannisha (6th-level Fighter, elf female): AL CG; AC 4; MV 12; F6; hp 38; THAC0 15 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 15, C 11, I 12, W 13, Ch 15; ML 14; *bracers of defense AC 5, longsword +1* (specialized), *dagger +2*, potion of *water breathing*.

Griffons: INT semi (4); AL N; AC 3; MV 12, fly 30 (C, D if mounted); HD 7; hp 35 each; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/2–16; SZ L; ML 12; XP 650; *MM*/178.

Arrival in Newtemple

Moments after the PCs set down atop the cliffs, three acolytes and one of the priests (Killian the rakshasa, in disguise) come running out of the temple (area **A** on the wilderness map). The acolytes are teenagers wearing yellow robes; all three have been *charmed* by the rakshasas. They approach the PCs while Killian stays near the temple, deliberately keeping his distance from the griffons who might sense his true form.

Upon reaching the PCs, one of the acolytes asks, "Come you as friend or foe?" If the PCs reveal that they have been sent by the temple of Pelor in Greyhawk, the acolytes allow the PCs to dismount before escorting them toward Killian and the temple.

Killian introduces himself as one of the temple priests. Using his *ESP* ability to determine the true reason for the party's arrival, he makes small talk, asking about the temple in Greyhawk and wondering why the PCs were sent by the temple. He will seem to believe wholeheartedly any lie the PCs tell him. A few farmers who live near the temple arrive during the conversation, having spotted the fliers. They are immediately suspicious of the PCs but Killian quickly allays their fears. The farmers loiter around the temple until Killian takes the PCs inside, the acolytes following

obediently behind. Once inside, Killian leads the PCs to the lounge (area **5**) and instructs the three acolytes to bring them food and drink. He apologizes for being the only priest available, claiming that the high priest, Alladus, is meditating, while his fellow priest, Harthuul, is out in the country tending to the needs of the local parish. Killian is glad to help the PCs any way he can, politely answering all questions with a look of absolute sincerity.

If Killian is told why the PCs have come and is shown the letter from the church in Greyhawk City, he informs the PCs that they must speak to Alladus but that he is unavailable until the next morning.

The PCs have the rest of the day and that night to do as they wish. They are given access to the temple proper (area **1**), lounge (area **5**), and guest quarters (area **8**), and they may leave to explore the village. Each of them is assigned one of the guest rooms toward the back of the temple.

Acolytes: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 to determine ability scores; ML 12; unarmed.

The Hand of Pelor

The next morning, the PCs finally meet Alladus, the high priest. The man wears the robes typical of the temple and apologizes for not seeing the PCs the night before. He then leads them to the sanctuary (area **2**). After a short, silent prayer during which Alladus reads the minds of the PCs, he unlocks and opens the doors to the sanctuary, allowing the PCs inside.

"There," Alladus says with seeming awe. "The Hand of Pelor."

The PCs see an acolyte, kneeling before a small altar, spinning what appears to be a large, gilded top. The young boy watches the toy very carefully, giving it a spin whenever it begins to slow down.

"We found it in the catacombs beneath the temple," Alladus says. "We had no idea what it was for years until Brother Harthuul had a vision last spring. We believe that the object is the fabled Hand of Pelor: a little known artifact of the church that was lost centuries ago. This is almost definite proof that this temple has always been a house of Pelor, bless his light."

If asked, Alladus tells the PCs that as long as the artifact spins, evil creatures cannot assail the temple or the homes of any followers of Pelor who regularly worship at the temple. Evil creatures fall deathly ill and must retreat before Pelor's light. Alladus asks that no magic be cast on the top (artifacts don't radiate magic anyway) and claims that the artifact has been in use since Coldeven 580 CY.

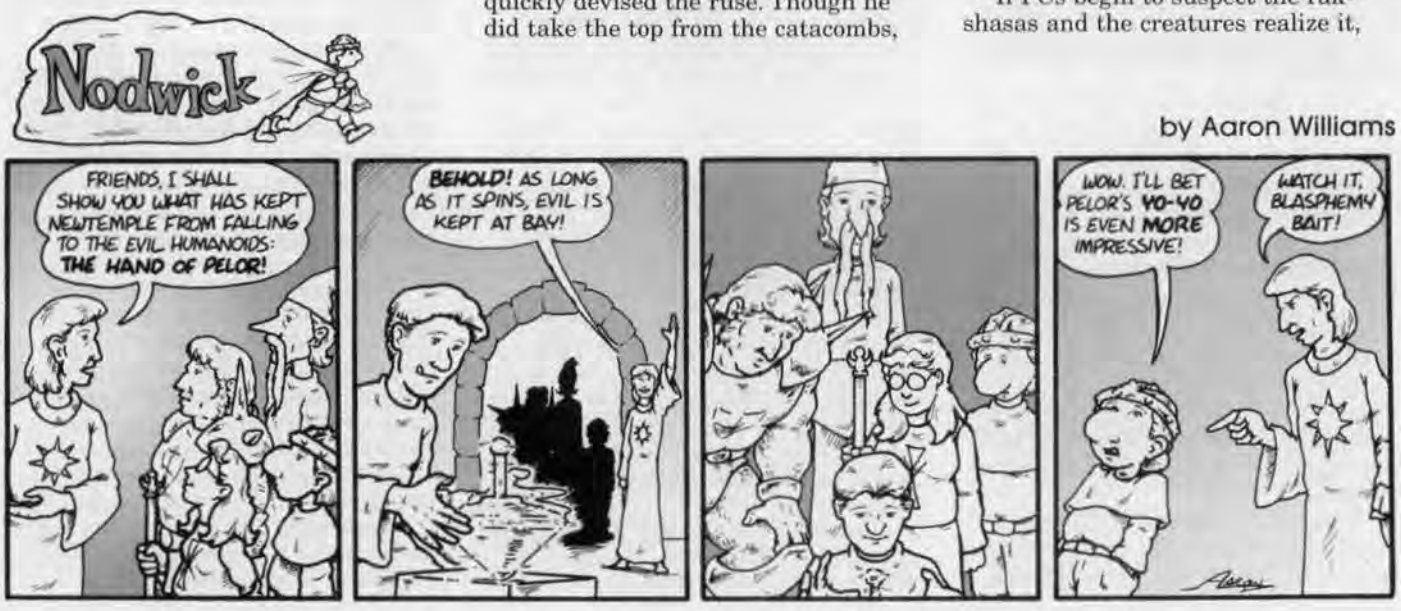
The Hand of Pelor is a sham, of course. Killian told Alladus why the PCs had come and the "high priest" quickly devised the ruse. Though he did take the top from the catacombs, it has no magical properties whatsoever, having been brought by a family of refugees from Elredd. The acolyte currently spinning the top is the first to do so (and only started after the PCs arrived). The charmed acolyte and does whatever Alladus bids him.

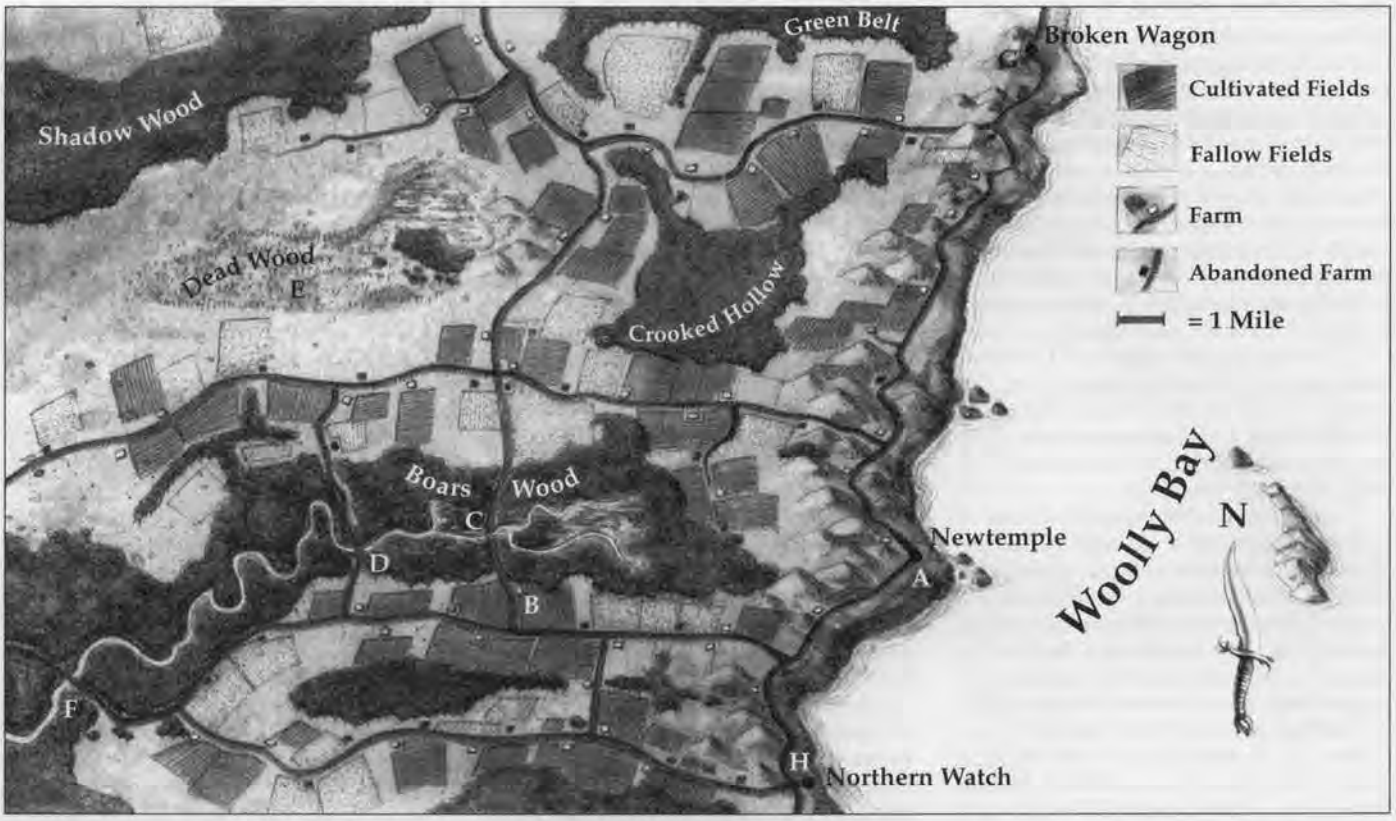
PCs making a successful Religion or Ancient History proficiency check have never heard of the Hand of Pelor. If asked, Alladus explains that the Hand of Pelor is ancient and almost unheard of except to the most knowledgeable sages.

Overstaying Their Welcome

The PCs are free to come and go as they please after Alladus shows them the "artifact." However, after a day or so, the rakshasas become edgy and irritable, though they do nothing to tip their hands. They remain helpful and courteous, providing almost anything the PCs require (within their "limited power"). Harthuul keeps close tabs on the PCs' every move, using his *invisibility* spell to remain unseen. The rakshasas carefully search their surroundings via *ESP* before entering any restricted or secret areas of the church, making sure they aren't followed by invisible PCs. After three days, Killian asks about the group's arrangements for transport. He points out that the waters of Woolly Bay are dangerous: he himself witnessed several ships being attacked within sight of the cliffs by either pirates or humanoids.

If PCs begin to suspect the rakshasas and the creatures realize it,


Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
FRIENDS, I SHALL SHOW YOU WHAT HAS KEPT NEWTEMPLE FROM FALLING TO THE EVIL HUMANOIDS: THE HAND OF PELOR!
BEHOLD! AS LONG AS IT SPINS, EVIL IS KEPT AT BAY!
WOW. I'LL BET PELOR'S YO-YO IS EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE!
WATCH IT, BLASPHEMY BAIT!



Killian brings them a letter for the High Priestess in Greyhawk City. The letter seems quite innocent: a ten page treatise addressed to Sarana, telling her about the Hand of Pelor in painstaking detail. The letter tells exactly where the top was found and even provides a "possible history" of the temple, going back as far as the first Suel migrations over a millennium ago. The document is a complete fabrication.

If the PCs attack the "priests" or suspect their true nature, the rakshasas have one final trick up their proverbial sleeve; see "Concluding the Adventure" for details.

The Newtemple Parish

The residents of Newtemple are very suspicious and view magic of any kind as an offense against the gods. Only healing magic is considered "proper." They are also superstitious about their dead and allow none but the family of the deceased to touch a dead body.

Weapons of war are forbidden in Newtemple. Soon after the rakshasas' arrival five years ago, the edict was set down. The locals all know this law and abide by it (since it really doesn't affect them much anyway), though they don't understand it. PCs with weapons other than bows or farming implements (such as scythes and pitchforks) are shunned by the people and sometimes stared at, though no one mentions the law unless asked about it specifically. If the "priests" are consulted about this law, they tell the PCs that Pelor is a god of healing, not war. They point out that the Hand of Pelor works most effectively when defending the defenseless; it is feared that weapons of war might offend the sun god. This theory is nonsense, of course. The rakshasas invoked the ban to eliminate the use of crossbows in the parish.

PCs soon notice that almost half of the farms are deserted. No smoke comes from their chimneys, and no glimmer of candlelight is seen within once darkness has fallen. The fields around these houses are fallow, weeds and stunted crops the only things that grow in them.

The silence of the day is broken by the sound of far-distant drums somewhere to the south. Though the sky is clear, smoke always seems to hang on the horizon. At night, an eerie red glow in the distance persists until dawn. Distant howls can be heard, but these are always from far away. The residents of Newtemple are 0-level humans. Each local knows 1d4–1 rumors, but whether they are willing to divulge rumors to strangers is another matter entirely.

Newtemple residents: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 1d6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 to determine ability scores; ML 10; unarmed (50%), pitchfork (35%), or scythe (15%).

Newtemple Encounters

A. Temple of Pelor. A lawn of cut grass surrounds this large building. Though the whitewashed walls are clean and a beautiful stained-glass window adorns the wall over the main entrance, an ominous shadow has befallen the structure. A tall tower, topped by a glass dome, stands proudly above the rest of the temple.

The temple and the shadowy pall enshrouding it are detailed in "The Temple of Pelor" section.

B. Hank Farm. This modest farm is located south of Boars Wood. Bob Hank, the oldest of the three Hank brothers who tend the farm, can tell the PCs how the Old East Bridge (area **C**) was destroyed:

> "It was a clear afternoon, and we were threshing the wheat. It was the late summer of 583. Dad had gone to Broken Wagon, and it was just me and Emery out in the field.
>
> "We heard a noise like a waterfall, and Emery points up over the woods. Sure enough, we see what looks like fire falling from the sky. Then we heard a shriek and the sound of thunder. We were scared, but we kept watching the rain of fire coming down over there.
>
> "Then the strangers came out of the woods. A couple of them wore black robes and fur caps, screaming like women and running ahead of the rest. A half-elf with a beard followed them, carrying an elf who looked burnt pretty bad. The man in armor was last, carryin' another burnt body and howlin' like a dog.
>
> "Just then there was another crack of thunder. A cloud that looked like a big, red mushroom spewed up out of the woods. 'Run!' the bearded elf yelled, so we ran.
>
> "Well, the strangers claimed they'd destroyed the evil that haunted the woods. I went for a look a month later. The whole bridge was gone, all right. In its place was a burned patch of marsh, a hundred feet across. I didn't go back there again."

Neither Bob Hank nor anyone else in town visits the ruins of the Old East Bridge (area **C**).

C. Old East Bridge. The overgrown road leading through Boars Wood ends abruptly. A stream flows eastward into a 60' diameter crater formed by some great upheaval. The soil gives way to a dusting of colorless ash, and the water forming in the crater has a layer of gray scum atop it. The creek continues beyond the crater, heading eastward. The creek is about 35 feet across.

The crater of destroyed ground is centered at the point where a bridge once spanned the creek. Bits of rotted timber still litter the area, and the trees on the edge of the burned area show signs of fire damage and new growth.

This was once the site of a battle between a band of NPC adventurers and the creature that lived under the bridge. The group's Wizard caused most of the devastation with a *fire wand of Suloise*. Unfortunately, he was knocked unconscious when the Wild Mage in the group lost control of his own *fireball*, killing one of their number and injuring several others. The *fire wand* was left behind and exploded while the group retreated.

The monster they fought, unhurt by the *fireball*, fled upstream. It left its treasure here however. Buried in the stagnant spot on the northeast side of the crater, amid numerous bones, are several gems: a garnet (500 gp), a topaz (500 gp), three pearls (100 gp each), a bloodstone (50 gp), a moonstone (50 gp), two pieces of azurite (10 gp each), and three eye agates (10 gp each). If the PCs dig here, 1d4–1 gems can be excavated each hour.

D. New East Bridge. A 40'-long, arching wooden bridge spans the creek here. The road leading to the bridge on either side is overgrown with grass and weeds. The bridge itself looks weathered, and ivy grows up one side, wrapping around the wooden rails.

The froghemoth that used to lair beneath the Old East Bridge escaped from that spot and now dwells here. This bridge was built so locals could avoid the Old Bridge, which was rumored to be haunted.

The froghemoth dwells in a rancid, stagnant pool under the bridge and waits patiently for prey. Submerged except for its eyestalks, nostrils, and tentacles, the froghemoth looks like nothing more than an innocuous plant. If the PCs try to cross the bridge, the froghemoth attacks up to four different targets with its 15'-long tentacles. Each tentacle inflicts 1d4+4 points of constriction damage each round. Each tentacle is AC 2 and withstands 20 points of damage before severing. An Open Doors roll is needed to pull free of a tentacle.

The round after the froghemoth snares prey with its tentacles, it pulls one victim (chosen randomly) toward its mouth, automatically biting for 4d4 points of damage unless the victim breaks free.

The froghemoth's 10' tongue is not long enough to snare targets on the bridge but can attack PCs hanging over the bridge or wading through the creek. If the tongue hits with a natural roll of 19 or 20, the victim is immediately pulled into the creature's mouth and swallowed whole, suffering 4d4 points of damage each round. Those reduced to –10 hit points are completely devoured. If the tongue hits with any other roll, the victim must make a surprise roll; if successful, the victim can make an attack vs. AC 10 to grab hold of the bridge and keep from being snapped up in the froghemoth's jaws.

Froghemoth: INT animal (1); AL N; AC 6 (tongue), 4 (body), 2 (tentacles); MV 4, swim 8; HD 16; hp 74 (body), 20 (tentacle), 13 (tongue); THAC0 5; #AT 1 (tongue) or 4 (tentacles) plus 1 (bite); Dmg 5–8 (per tentacle) or 5–50 (bite); SA swallow, constriction; SD immune to fire (magical

Rumors in Newtemple

Roll 1d8:

1. They say, some nights you can hear an unnatural chanting coming from the tower of the temple. (True)

2. The Dead Wood is the source of true evil in Newtemple. (False)

3. There are ancient catacombs hidden under the temple. (True)

4. The Priests of Pelor have protected us from the humanoids. They say the creatures are afraid to come here. (True)

5. Something evil lurked beneath the Old East Bridge until a group of adventurers destroyed the thing a few years ago. Nothin' but ashes out there now. The Hank brothers know more about it. They saw the whole thing. (Partially true)

6. After the Old East Bridge was burned down, people started disappearing by the New Bridge. (True)

7. I bet that those dang displacer beasts are back. That's what done the killin'. Damn things come here to breed! (False)

8. The Boars Wood is haunted by a creature that looks like a giant frog with huge tentacles twice as long as a man is tall! (True)

fire inflicting 10 points of damage or more causes half damage); suffers 1 hp/die of electrical damage (also *slowed* for one round); half damage from blunt weapons; SZ H (18' tall); ML 19; XP 21,000; *MC Annual 2*/59.

If the PCs search the water under the north end of the bridge, they find numerous animal and humanoid bones. Any light shined into the water reveals something glittering below. Amid the bones are several hundred coins scattered about (522 gp)—the remains of an orc treasure wagon loaded with booty that passed through the Newtemple area on its way south. Every hour the PCs search the area uncovers 1d4–1 of the following items: an elvish bottle made of solid, transparent crystal (900 gp value); an amber unicorn statuette (400 gp value); a tarnished bronze cup (120 gp value); a dagger set with four pieces of obsidian (60 gp value once cleaned up); a *ring of spell turning*; a *shield +1*; a *scroll of illumination* (*EM*/1075) in a bone scroll case.

E. Dead Wood. The tall shapes of bare tree trunks climb toward the sky, looking like row after row of giant stakes impaling the ground. No birds or insects sound from these woods. The woods are completely deserted.

F. West Bridge. This bridge marks the western edge of the rakshasas' domain. It is garrisoned by sixteen orcs of the Bloody Fist tribe. They are led by a brutal orog named Warmok. The locals warn PCs of the orcs if they wander in this direction.

Orcs (16): INT average (8); AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 9 (12); HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 15; *MM*/281; brigandine armor, longsword, spear, 2d4 gp.

Warmok (orog): INT high (11); AL LE; AC 4 (10); MV 6 (12); HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3 (18/04 Strength); SZ M; ML 13; XP 65; *MM*/281; banded mail, battle axe.

G. Broken Wagon. This hamlet is held by goblins of the Evil Eye tribe, notorious for dipping their crossbow bolts in Type C poison. They are led by a giant troll named Erkk and attack anyone visiting the village.

Goblins (32): INT low (7); AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 10; XP 15; *MM*/163; hide armor, dagger, light crossbow.

Erkk (giant troll): INT low (5); AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 8; hp 53; THAC0 13; #AT 1 (club) or 2 (claws); Dmg 9–19 (2d6+7) or 2–7/2–7; SA hurl boulders for 2–16 points of damage; SD regenerates 2 hit points per round; catch missiles 25% of the time; SZ L; ML 17; XP 1,400; *MM*/349.

H. Northern Watch. This 30' wide, 60' high tower marks the southern border of the Newtemple Parish. Once the northern watch for the city of Beachcourt, the tower now stands in partial ruins. The cliffs nearby are about 100 feet high.

The Temple of Pelor

The temple stands 80 feet west of the cliffs. Its whitewashed stone walls and well-groomed yard give it a clean, peaceful look. The tall, thin windows have glass panes mounted so they can be thrown open, as well as shutters to protect the glass and the occupants of the temple from both the weather and things that stalk the nights of Newtemple.

The temple's acolytes do not speak unless addressed. They are local youths ranging from 12 to 18 years old, and none has been taught magic or the true teachings of Pelor. All of the acolytes are 0-level humans who have been *charmed* by Harthuul.

Where natural illumination does not do, the "priests" and acolytes use candles to light rooms. Since worship services are performed exclusively during the day, there are no light sources in the temple proper aside from the stained glass windows.

The outer doors to the temple are locked at night. Alladus holds the keys to all locked doors within the temple. However, most of the interior doors do not have locks. Ceiling height, unless otherwise noted, is a standard ten feet.

The shadowy gloom over the temple is a pall sent by the god Pelor himself. Tired of the rakshasas' blasphemous conduct and disappointed by the failure of the last group of adventurers sent to uncover the true evil in Newtemple, Pelor has thrown a shadow over the entire structure, allowing no sunlight to shine upon it. This dimness remains over the temple until the rakshasas are removed. The rakshasas have no easy explanation for this unnatural occurrence but suggest that humanoids might be responsible—that the gloom is meant to frighten away the priests and parishioners. The effect first manifested soon after the NPC adventurers who fought the froghemoth left the area in 583 CY. Everyone in the area knows about when it began, including the acolytes, although only the "priests" have a remotely plausible theory to explain its existence.

Ground Floor

1. Temple. A circular, stained-glass window depicting a blazing sun graces the west wall of the temple, 18 feet above the floor. A similar window depicting a Priest of Pelor with the sun behind him adorns the east wall, above the second floor balcony (area **14**). The temple's hardwood roof reaches its peak some 35 feet above, held aloft by intricately carved beams concealed by shadows.

Several long, uncomfortable looking wooden benches line the north and south walls, flanking a light blue carpet that runs from the main doors to the altar.

The altar itself is a simple table of plain, whitewashed stone. A white cloth covers it, and a tall, white candle in a silver candlestick (100 gp value) stands on either side.

Despite the windows and candles, the temple is dimly illuminated thanks to the shadowy pall cast over the edifice.

Services are held every Godsday, led by one or more of the "priests." If PCs are present on one such day, they are allowed to participate but are under no compulsion to do so. The services last an hour long and are simple and to the point, with hymns and communal prayers. The rakshasas have studied the ceremonies from books in the temple library, and though they find the charade annoying, it is also necessary to maintain appearances.

If the windows could be removed intact (a major undertaking), they would each be worth about 5,000 gp. Broken, the shattered pieces would

fetch only about 100 gp. The eastern stained-glass window is magical and fully detailed in area **14**.

2. Sanctuary. The door to this room is locked. Only Alladus has the key.

The room is long and narrow, seemingly added to the temple as an afterthought. At either end of the room is a large table. A young man wearing yellow robes sits in front of the southern table, spinning a gilded top. He ignores the PCs' entrance into the room.

The top, or "Hand of Pelor" as the priests call it, is nonmagical. The acolyte has been told that if it stops spinning, it could spell doom for Newtemple. Though unarmed, the acolyte fights to the best of his ability to keep anyone from grabbing or stopping the spinning top. He has only been spinning it for a few hours, and Alladus has arranged a regular rotation of acolytes to keep it going so long as the PCs are around. If anyone asks how long the top has been spinning, the acolytes are trained to reply "several months now," as per the priests' instructions.

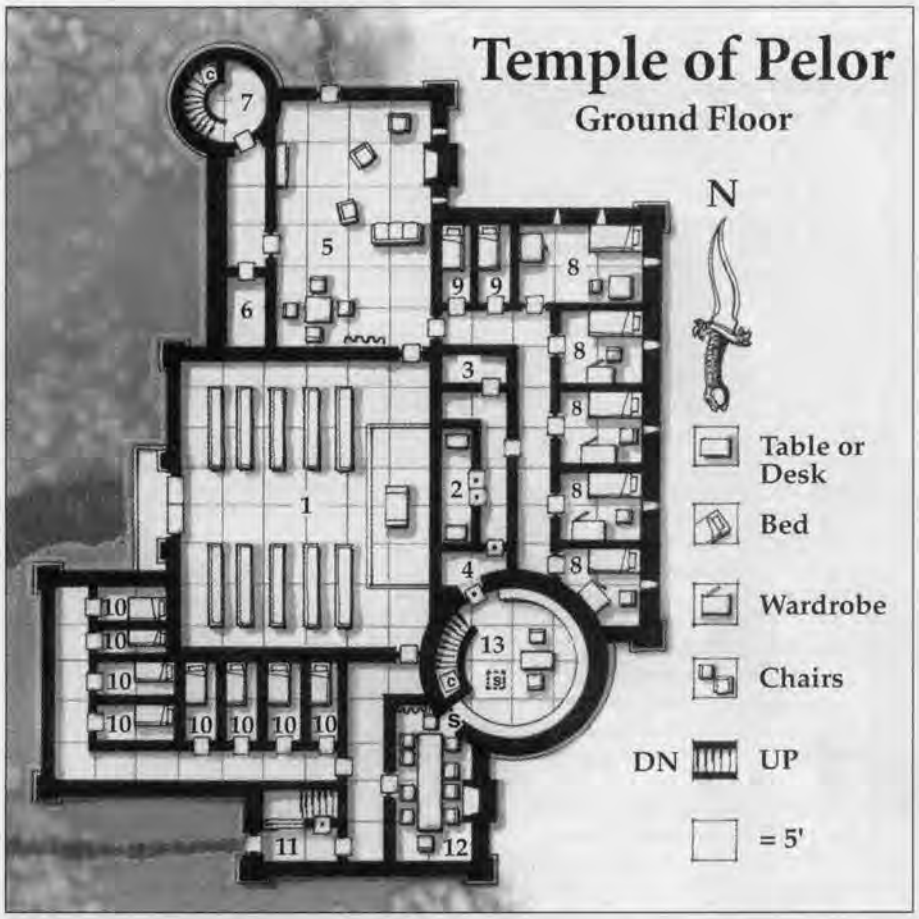
The table on the other end of the room is covered by a white cloth. A golden goblet sits on each end of the table. Between the goblets lies a 2'-long silver spear with three small bells hanging from it.

The spear-bell is worth 100 gp and, with a successful Religion proficiency check, can be identified as bells used in ceremonies to the god Trithereon. The rakshasas found the bells in the catacombs under the temple and incorporated them into their bogus ceremonies.

The golden goblets, also used in the Godsday ceremonies, are each worth 150 gp due to their excellent craftsmanship. They were brought to the area by the rakshasas, and careful examination reveals faint stains within. Whether this is blood or some kind of ceremonial wine is impossible to tell without magic; in truth, it is a mixture of both.

If the PCs enter this area before the rakshasas have time to prepare their "Hand of Pelor" ruse, the acolyte and the top are not present.

3. Vestry. Hooks line the walls of this room, and numerous yellow robes hang from them.



Of the twenty robes in this room, six have gold fringe, and three have gold trappings and a gold-lined sash. The latter three robes are used by the three "priests" on Godsday. The plain yellow robes are of good cloth, nicer than the robes typically worn by the acolytes.

4. Locked Room. Both doors to this room are locked. Acolytes are forbidden to enter this room or the tower beyond. An *alarm* spell has been cast on the floor just inside the north door, set to trigger if the phrase "All hail Ravanna" is not uttered before crossing that area.

Alladus has keys to the doors. The room is empty and dark.

5. Lounge. Several comfortable chairs and a couch occupy this room. On the south wall hangs a white cloth tapestry adorned with an ornate representation of the sun. In the southwest corner of the room stands a plain wooden table surrounded by four hardwood chairs. A wide bookshelf crowded with knick-knacks stands against the west wall just north of the western door.

Built into the eastern wall is a large stone fireplace. The mantle over the hearth has several crude ceramic statues of men in yellow apparel.

This room is where the rakshasas take their meals. They also meet locals here and use the area to meet with the PCs. The room is quite comfortable, a cool wind usually blowing in from the Woolly Bay through the open windows. The items on the book shelf are worthless trinkets, while the figurines on the hearth have an ugly, homemade look about them. Most were gifts to the priests from the people in Newtemple.

6. Storage. Mops, brooms, buckets, and ladders are crammed in here and may (20% chance) tumble out noisily when the door is open. Shelves lining the walls are loaded with more supplies: candles, dirty rags, cakes of

soap, and whatever else the DM deems appropriate.

7. North Tower. This dark room is bare except for a set of steps rising to an open trapdoor ten feet above.

8. Guest Rooms. The whitewashed stone walls of these small rooms are unadorned. Across from the door is a narrow, openable window that is shuttered on the outside. A bed stands in one corner of the room, neatly made, though a little dusty. On the opposite wall is a table and a wardrobe with drawers. A chamber pot lies under the bed, and a pitcher and bowl rest on the table.

These rooms are reserved for guests of the temple (which are few). PCs seeking a place to stay are put here, one to a room, starting with the northernmost one.

9. Guest Servants' Rooms. Each of these plain rooms holds a narrow bed, chamber pot, and two hooks on the wall. These rooms are used for the servants of any visiting guests.

10. Acolytes' Cells. Much like the servants quarters, each of these rooms has a simple, narrow bed with a straw mattress and a chamber pot underneath. Each room serves as the quarters for one acolyte and all his worldly possessions: a robe; a wooden bowl, cup, and spoon; and a brass symbol of a sun (which is not a holy symbol, though each acolyte thinks otherwise). The temple has eight acolytes in all.

During daylight hours, all but three of the cells are empty. The two acolytes that have night duty sleep during the day on a rotating shift. Now that the "Hand of Pelor" is in operation, a third youth assigned to keep the top spinning at night also sleeps here during the day.

At night, five of the cells contain sleeping acolytes.

11. Stairwell. This room is barely illuminated by a small, round window high in one wall. A locked door is set beneath the stone steps that mount the north wall. Behind the locked door are a series of slimy stone steps that descend to area **22** of the catacombs. Alladus carries the only key to the door.

The ascending stairs lead up to the acolyte's kitchen on the second floor (area **17**). The other two doors to this room, including the one leading outside, are locked only at night. Again, Alladus carries the only keys.

12. Acolytes' Dining Hall. A large wooden table dominates this room, and ten hard wooden chairs are arrayed about it. A crude chalk drawing of a blazing sun done on white cloth hangs on the north wall, while across from the door is a fireplace with several logs in it. A tapped barrel stands in the southwest corner.

This is where the acolytes come for each of their three meals. The menu enjoys little variety, with gruel and bread served at the morning and noon meals, and stew served in the evenings. The barrel is three quarters full of water.

The secret door on the northeast side of the room is used by the rakshasas for easy access to the acolyte's wing. The secret door is locked from within area **13** until the rakshasas need access.

After a local youth has served for a year or two at the temple, the "priests" deem it time for him to move on. The acolyte is taken from his room, usually at night, and either eaten or sacrificed in the tower. The other acolytes are told that the youth has left the temple to travel the world, spreading the word of Pelor.

13. Library. The PCs are denied access to any part of this tower. If they enter the room without permission, the rakshasas do their utmost to deal with the trespassers without attracting undue attention.

Shelves littered with loose scrolls and books line the walls of this round room. Only the steps to the west are free of bookcases. A small table, graced with a chess set, is flanked by two large, comfortable-looking chairs. A thick carpet with a sunlike design covers most of the floor, and a single candle sconce hangs on the west wall.

The secret door in the southwest corner of the room is built into the bookcases and is opened by pivoting one of the books on the fifth shelf. A 3' wide section of the bookcase pops open on secret hinges. The lock can be jammed simply by putting a book too large to be pivoted in the slot (and one lies next to the trigger book on the shelf). The book—a worthless doctrine titled *The Musings of a Flan Monk*—can be removed from the shelf without triggering the secret door.

Though the bookshelves are not full, there are about 200 books and 50 loose scrolls here. A quick perusal reveals that all is not right at the temple. Most of the scrolls are written in a language consisting of mostly up-and-down slash marks (ancient Rakshasan) and, if translated, prove to be religious treatises dealing with the worship of some evil, ten-headed god called Ravanna. The margins of one scroll are marked with the same language, and part of the text is circled several times. This quote is what brought the rakshasas to the area. It reads (if properly translated): *"Atop the reeking cliffs in the Temple of the Sun lies that which will bring great Ravanna back to the true people and set them above others forever."*

The books include novellas, historical accounts, textbooks, manuals, Priests' diaries, and the like. The diaries provide insight into the day-to-day activities of the Priests who maintained the temple before the rakshasa's arrival. There's also a non-cumulative 10% chance per hour of study that the PCs learn about the glass golem in area **14**, created to protect the temple and obey the commands of anyone wearing the yellow robes of the priesthood. The rakshasas used these books to learn about the golem and the proper ways to conduct Godsday ceremonies for the local parishioners.

Among these mundane tomes are three spellbooks acquired by the temple over the years:

❖ A ratty little traveling spellbook with leather covers. The front page reads *Helvick Blackhand: His Book*. It contains the spells *armor, battering ram*, bind, cantrip, detect magic, past life*, read magic, shatter,* and *shocking grasp*. Helvick was a little-known Mage out of Elredd who made the mistake of trusting the rakshasas and spending a night at the temple.

❖ An unnamed book that is badly burned. The only legible spells are *Archveult's skybolt*, Bigby's battering gauntlet*, Bigby's grasping hand,* and *dimension door*.

❖ Not so much a book as individual leathered skins of some animal,

these scrolls were once the property of an orc witchdoctor who wandered into the area and was devoured by the rakshasas. The skins hold the following spells: *animate dead animals**, *chill touch*, *read magic*, *attract ghoul**, and *blastbones**.

Spells marked with an asterisk are fully described in the *Wizard's Spell Compendium*, but the DM should substitute other spells if this resource is unavailable.

The secret door in the floor can be opened by turning the candle sconce counter-clockwise 45 degrees. The secret panel slides aside with the rumble of stone against stone. (The noise is not so loud that it can be heard outside the room when the doors are closed.) Turning the sconce back causes the floor panel to close after one round. The door opens over the steps leading down to area **33** in the catacombs.

Second Floor

14. Balcony. The ornate railing of this balcony exactly matches the scrollwork of the beams above. The large stained-glass window depicts a majestic warrior with a blazing sun in the background. He holds a staff and is dressed in yellow robes.

This balcony is primarily reached by ladders and used by the acolytes to clean the stained glass window. There is also a secret door leading to area **18**. The secret door gives the rakshasas easy access to the temple from their tower. A peephole in the wall near the secret door allows the rakshasas to spy on congregations in the temple.

The figure incorporated into the stained-glass window is a glass golem created by the Priests of Pelor. The rakshasas, with the help of the diaries in area **13**, have learned how to command the golem. The golem's standing orders are to follow the instructions of the Priests (or anyone dressed like them) and to respond to the *magic mouth* in area **21**.

Glass golem: INT non (0); AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2–24; SA surprise, *prismatic spray*; SD +2 or better to hit, regenerates 1 point per round; immune to poison and mind-based spells; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20; XP 5,000; *MM*/169.

The guardian of the temple comes to life!

This golem attacks with the staff, cutting foes with the sharp glass.

15. Upper Tower. Two narrow windows allow light to filter into this small room. A wooden ladder leads up to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

This room is usually empty. The ladder leads up to the flat roof of the tower, which is ringed by a 4'-tall stone battlement.

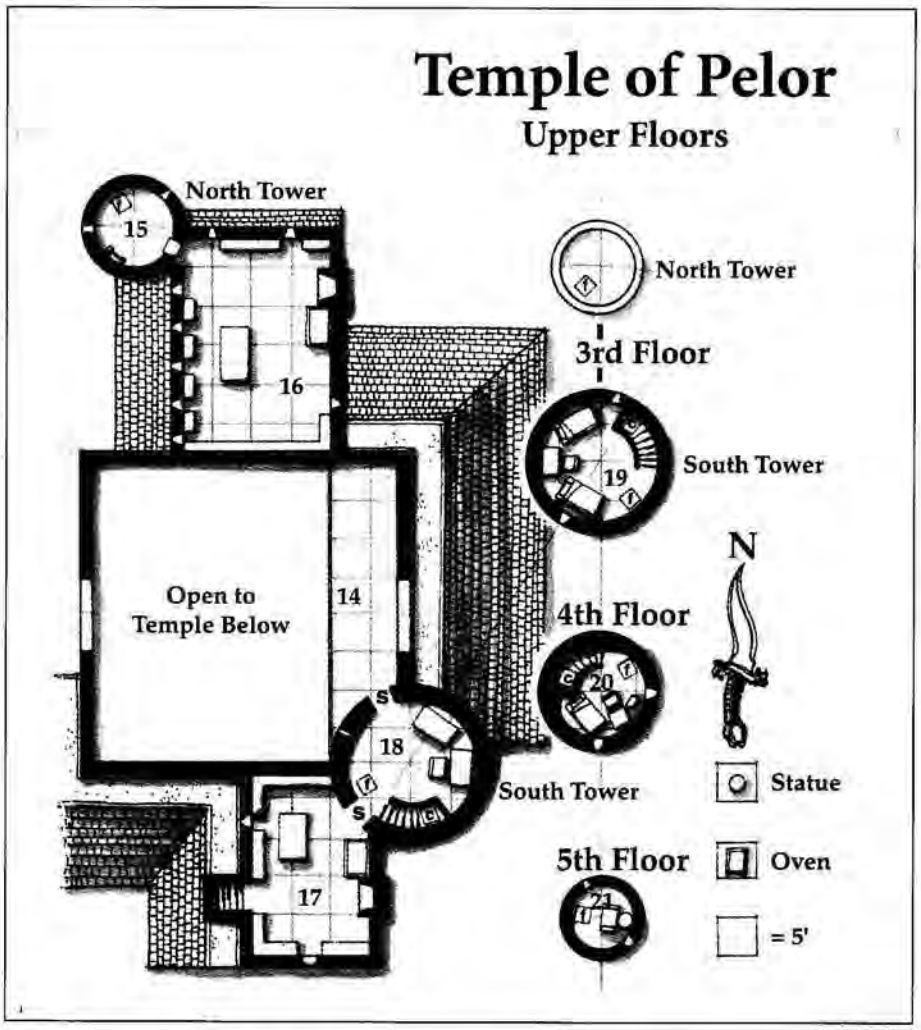
16. Kitchen. A stained wooden table dominates the kitchen, while shelves of foodstuffs line the walls. Set into the east wall is a fireplace, complete with fire and pot of bubbling stew.

Three times a day, two acolytes prepare meals for the temple's Priests and guests. The rest of the time, the acolytes come and go, as the kitchen is also used as a laundry. Bread is often baking in the stone oven next to the fireplace; once baked, the bread is sold to the locals to raise money for the temple.

The shelves hold dried meat, flour, spices, and other ingredients. Just about anything that can be found in a kitchen is here, including silverware, knives, and cooking utensils. The central table has bloodstains on it and is scored with knife marks.

17. Acolyte's Kitchen. This kitchen is much like area **16**. Unlike area **16**, however, the cutting table in this room is less bloodstained, as the acolytes eat very little meat.

18. Scriptorium/Lab. This dark, windowless room smells faintly of chemicals. A set of stone stairs follows the south wall up to an open trapdoor in the ceiling. A large writing table stands against the east wall of the room, a skull staring silently from one corner. Next to the skull lie several sheets of parchment and a black, three-pronged candelabra with three black candles.



Against the northeast wall is another table, this one covered with beakers, flasks, and jars full of various multicolored substances. The top of the table is stained and burned in several places; it is pitted with marks that look like they were made by the teeth of some predatory animal. On the northwest wall is a small shutter, a brass latch holding it securely closed.

This room serves as Alladus's lab. The candelabra is solid silver but tarnished beyond recognition. Cleaning the candelabra reveals its true color and value (200 gp). The black candles act as *incense of meditation*, but only for Evil beings. Good clerics who meditate by the light and scent of these candles to cast spells at minimum spell effect: *cure wounds* spells heal minimal damage; areas of effect, range, and duration are reduced by half; and saving throws against the spells are made at +1. Each candle burns for about eight hours, and there are three more candles in the drawer of the desk.

The papers on the desk contain notes describing Alladus's "experiments on humans" and are quite graphic, reading more like a cookbook than a legitimate scientific work, noting how different substances and preparations can be used to season "meat." One sheet has instructions for making the black *candles of meditation*, using an innocent's fat.

The lab table itself has various beakers of spell components; like the spellbooks in the library, these were taken from captured or defeated mages. The contents of the little lab are worth a total of 700 gp to any decent alchemist, but the beakers and flasks are delicate and hard to transport. A wizard PC could use the equipment in this room to cut the cost of his own lab by 10%.

A 5" × 5" shutter on the wall near the secret door covers a small peephole that provides an unobstructed view of the temple (area **1**).

Third Floor

19. Killian and Harthuul's Room. Unlike the rest of the temple, this room is filthy. The walls are dingy and covered with slashes (rakshasa writing) made with dried human blood. These scrawls are actually vile passages copied from the rakshasan scrolls in the library. Killian and Harthuul meditate in this room, reading and chanting the horrible litanies on the walls.

A hard wooden bed without a mattress stands on either side of the room. A wooden table strewn with papers, a quill, a candle, and a bottle of ink rests between the beds.

The papers on the desk are written in Rakshasan. They describe, in graphic detail, some of Alladus's experiments on humans. One mentions Harthuul's attack on several local farms and his subsequent punishment by Alladus—which Killian writes about with glee. Reading the whole stack (if the writing can be translated) takes several hours.

Fourth Floor

20. Alladus's Room. The windows of this room are caked with dust. A trapdoor in the floor leads down to area **19**, and a flight of stairs ends at a trapdoor leading to area **21** above.

The room contains a wooden bed without a mattress, a small desk with a candle melted to one corner, and a small table. On the table is a spyglass made of brass and wood. The Priests of Pelor acquired it several years ago from the glass maker who crafted the eastern stained glass of the main temple (area **14**). The spyglass is in fine condition and worth 250 gp.

The desk has a drawer holding several pages of blank parchment, an inkwell, six quills, a folded piece of paper sealed with wax, and two bottles. The folded paper is a trap and is enchanted with an *explosive runes* spell that detonates for 6d4+6 points of damage. The word "Farewell" is written in Common on the paper.

One of the bottles is solid gold (worth 30 gp) and holds an *oil of Lily of the Valley* (*EM*/773). The other bottle is made of blue glass and holds a potion of *lethargy* (*EM*/874). If the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA* tome is not available, substitute the above potions with *oil of fumbling* and a *philtre of stammering and stuttering*. Alladus knows the true nature of each potion and has left them here as another trap.

Fifth Floor

21. Temple of Ravanna. As soon as PCs open the trapdoor in the floor, a *magic mouth* appears and begins yelling and hissing in the Rakshasa tongue, warning that intruders are invading the temple. The yells can be heard throughout the temple.

Triggering the *magic mouth* awakens the glass golem if it has not already been destroyed. The golem stands guard in area **14** and attacks anyone not wearing the yellow robes of the priesthood who steps onto the balcony or enters the temple below (area **1**). If the glass golem leaps down from the balcony to attack intruders in the temple, it sustains 1–6 points of damage from the jump.

The roof of the tower is of a dusty dome of reinforced glass. An 8'-tall statue of Ravanna, the ten-headed rakshasa god, stands behind a small altar near the east wall. The first person in this room who sees the statue of Ravanna is attacked by 11 crawling claws. The claws attack from behind the statue, making it look like the statue is reaching out toward its intended prey. If the PC does not specifically state that he is attacking the hands, the DM should assume that he is attacking the statue. By the second round of combat, it becomes obvious that the crawling claws are not part of the statue.

The statue of Ravanna is hideous to behold. It appears to be blood-stained about the mouth and hands. The altar is also stained. The worship of Ravanna is performed irregularly on nights of the new moon. Women are kidnapped and then sacrificed to the god. The hands and mouths of the statue are then washed with the blood of the victim. To avoid preying on locals, Harthuul is often sent abroad to find suitable sacrifices.

If the PCs splash holy water or cast a *bless* spell on the statue or the altar, it crumbles to pieces. The PCs should receive 2,000 XP for destroying both the statue and the altar, 1,000 XP for each.

Crawling claws (11): INT non (0); AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD 2–4 hp; hp 4 (×4), 3 (×2), 2 (×5); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4 (armored) or 1–6 (unarmored); SA leap; SD immune to mind-affecting attacks; edged weapons inflict half damage; SZ T; ML 20; XP 35; *MM*/48.

The Catacombs

In 5249 SD (–267 CY), Priests and followers of the god Trithereon, fleeing from oppressions in the then-young Kingdom of Keoland, left the Sheldomar Valley. They eventually came to a peaceful land, protected from the sea by great cliffs, where they settled and built a temple. The Priests taught the people the word of Trithereon, tended to their injured and ill, and buried their dead in catacombs under the temple. Eventually, the Priests connected the temple itself to the catacombs, sealing off the old entrances to better protect the remains of the dead.

The temple thrived until 412 CY when a plague swept through the area. The Priests did all they could to help the people, but they too fell victim to the pestilence, and soon the temple was empty. Neglected, it fell into ruin. The temple was rebuilt by the church of Pelor in 480 CY. The catacombs, though largely intact, were never explored. The Priests of Pelor sealed the catacombs, choosing to honor the dead entombed within.

When the rakshasas arrived, they began excavating collapsed sections of the catacombs in search of an artifact that might restore Ravanna's influence in the world.

Ceilings in the catacombs are 10 feet high. Unless otherwise noted, all rooms and corridors are unlit.

22. Preparation Room.

> In the center of this room is a green slab of stone six feet long and almost three feet high. A musty smell fills the cool chamber, and tunnels disappear into darkness in every direction.

This is the room where corpses were prepared for interment in the catacombs. The slab is bare and made of solid limestone.

23. Crypts.

> Deep alcoves gape from either wall. The smell of death and decay is much stronger here.

These crypts were constructed some 600 years ago, replacing the ancient crypts to the west. Each alcove is piled high with bones and dust—the remains of Trithereon worshipers. Flickering candle or torch light makes the bones seem to move, although this is mere shadowplay.

Among the bones and piles of dust are several small, iron amulets with the pursuit rune on them. Anyone who makes a Religion proficiency check recognizes this as the sign of Trithereon.

Anyone in the northern catacombs can hear the echoing sounds of the prisoners in area **29**.

23A. Strange Webs. The back of this alcove has crumbled away, creating a narrow, debris-strewn passage leading to the ancient crypts (area **24**).

Filling the broken tunnel are strands of gray webbing. The mass is actually a living web that attacks anyone who comes within five feet.

Living web: INT semi (2); AL N; AC 9; MV 6; HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA *lightning bolt* twice/turn (3d4 points of damage; save vs. spell for half damage); SD immune to fire, water, heat, and cold attacks; edged weapons divide the living web into two smaller living webs (but inflict full damage); blunt weapons cause half damage; immune to *fear*-based attacks; SZ S; ML 10; XP 975; *MCA3*/117.

24. Ancient Crypts.

> The shallow niches that line the hall hold nothing more than dust, cobwebs, and bone fragments. Still, you have the uneasy feeling you are being watched.

These catacombs are older than those to the east and are strewn with rubble. Most of the bones of those interred here have turned to dust.

The rakshasas have trapped certain areas of the catacombs. These areas are marked with the letters **A–F** on the map. Each trap is different, as indicated below.

Though the remaining passages are presently safe, the use of violent magic (i.e., *fireball* or the like) has a 10% chance per die damage of causing a major collapse in the area of effect. Thus, a 6-HD fireball has a 60% chance of causing a collapse. PCs caught in the collapse must make a Dexterity check at –6 to avoid suffering 3–12 points of damage from falling debris. Those who suffer 10 or more points of damage are trapped under the rubble and must be freed by their comrades.

24A. Alarm. This 20' × 20' section is trapped with an *alarm* spell. Only the rakshasas can cross the area without triggering the spell.

24B. Crumbling Floor. This 20' × 20' area has not been trapped by the rakshasas but has a weak floor that collapses when more than 200 lbs. is placed upon it. Those stepping on the floor who fail a Dexterity check fall into a 10'-deep pit, suffering 2–12 points of damage from the drop and the falling debris.

24C. Shiny Object. Amid the rubble at the end of this corridor, the rakshasas have partially buried a metal shield angled to catch the light of torches, lanterns, and magical sources of illumination.

The shield has a *Nystul's magic aura* spell cast on it, shedding an aura of abjuration when *detect magic* is cast. It also radiates auras of enchantment and evocation due to other spells cast upon it. The shield has a *spelltouch* spell (see *WSC*/851) cast upon it (from a scroll found in the library, area **13**). The first PC to touch the shield triggers the *spelltouch*, unleashing a *spark shower* (see *WSC*/838). This spell creates a cloud of sizzling purple sparks, originating from the shield and shooting forth in a cone 20 feet long and 10 feet wide at the far end. Creatures within the area of effect suffer 4d4 points of damage if in contact with metal (including shields, weapons, armor, and gauntlets) or 2d4 points of damage otherwise, no save allowed.

Once the *spelltouch* and *spark shower* spells are triggered, only the *Nystul's magic aura* spell remains.

24D. Rune. The dust covering the floor has been swept away, and a rune has been painted in blood on the floor. This is actually a *sepia snake sigil* that attacks the first PC who reads the rune (THAC0 13). The rune vanishes once the spell is triggered.

24E. Trip Wire. Strung across the entrance of this chamber is an invisible trip wire that can only be spotted by a thief making a Find Traps roll at –25% or a spell such as *detect snares & pits* and *find traps*. Anyone who enters the room without avoiding or disarming the trap trips the wire and causes a ceiling collapse (as detailed above).

24F. Sinister Skull. Placed amid the debris is an orc's skull that seems unweathered by the passage of time. The skull is protected by a *skulltrap* spell (see *WSC*/823). The spell remains dormant until touched or struck. When the *skulltrap* discharges, the skull explodes, releasing a blast of Negative Energy inflicting 9d4 points of damage. All living creatures within 10 feet of the skull are allowed a saving throw vs. breath weapon to sustain half damage.

25. Priests' Crypt. The ornate iron door to this room is slightly ajar.

> Three stone sarcophagi rest against the far wall, their lids slightly askew. Words are etched into the wall above the sarcophagi and partially obscured by cobwebs.

When the rakshasas began to explore the catacombs beneath their new home, they found and desecrated the tomb that held the High Priests of Trithereon's temple. The tomb has been completely looted; the sarcophagi hold only dust and bone fragments. The words on the wall, written in Old Oeridian, read: *"A curse upon any who disturb this sacred place."*

26. Moldy Cavern. The entire floor and part of the northern wall of this cavern is covered with bluish-green mold. The floor is also littered with the remains of three human skeletons.

The bluish-green substance covering the floor and northern wall is, in fact, deep mold. Touching the mold releases a cloud of spores that completely fills the room, area **27**, and 30 feet down the catacombs to the west. Those caught in the spore cloud must save vs. paralyzation or suffer 1d10 points of damage and lose 1 point of Strength for 1d10 rounds. PCs who are infected by the spores continue to suffer 1d10 damage per day until dead, or until a *cure disease* spell is cast. Those who successfully save suffer half damage from the initial cloud, do not lose Strength, and do not suffer cumulative damage.

PCs can avoid the mold using *spider climb* to walk across the ceiling or by climbing along the southern wall. Successfully climbing across requires two successful Climb Walls rolls; the surface is somewhat slippery, but there are abundant handholds, applying a +25% modifier to the roll.

The skeletons are less than five years old—the remains of a few locals who were sent down by the rakshasas to explore the catacombs. Rotted clothing and burnt torch stubs are all that remain of their possessions.

Characters in this room can hear echoes of the prisoners in area **29**.

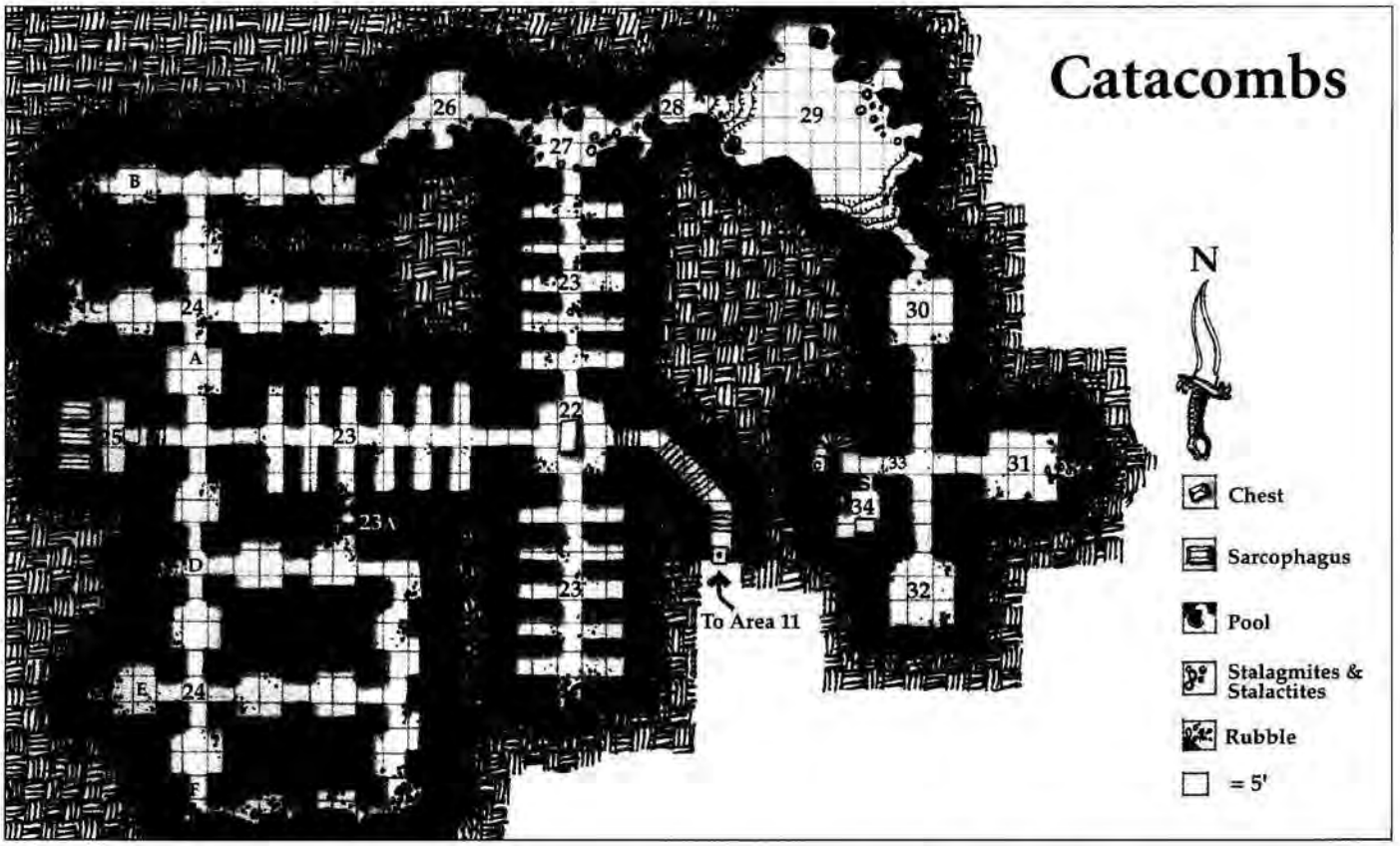
Deep mold: INT non (0); AL N; AC 9; HD n/a; hp n/a; THAC0 n/a; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA spores, Strength loss; SD immune to weapons; MR 20%; SZ L; ML n/a; XP 35; *MCA2*/88.

27. Wet Cavern.

> This cavern is naturally formed from the rock. The slimy walls glitter in your light, and there are small pools of scummy water on the floor. Numerous stalactites hang from the vaulted ceiling some fifteen feet above.

The floor of this chamber slopes down toward the north. The stalactites and the scummy water are both harmless, though any PC fighting and running in this chamber must make a Dexterity check every round or slip in one of the puddles, losing initiative the following round.

The cries and moans of the prisoners in area **29** can be clearly heard in this room.



28. Guard Room.

As you enter this small, natural cavern, several large, dark shapes suddenly lurch out of the corners and cracks, shambling toward you.

Guarding this room, with orders to let none pass but the rakshasas, are six monster zombies (ogres). The creatures were created by a Priest of Nerull who was promised his life on completion of the job.

The prisoners in area **29** can be clearly heard in this room.

Monster zombies (6): INT non (0); AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 33, 32, 30 (×2), 25, 22; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4–16; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* death magic, poison, and cold-based spells; SZ L (9' tall); ML 20; XP 650; *MM*/373.

29. Prison.

Mournful cries fill the darkness ahead of you. Moving toward the eerie wails, you step into a spacious cavern with a sunken floor. Natural steps lead down about 10 feet, and the cavern roof climbs to almost 20 feet above. The walls are slick with moisture. A few of the people huddled against the north wall have noticed you and are staring at you with fearful eyes.

There are 32 men, women, and children in this cavern. All are dressed in tattered clothing. All are dirty and hungry. These people are 0-level humans, most of them simple folk from villages scattered throughout the Wild Coast. They were brought to the temple by the rakshasas or came to Newtemple hoping to find sanctuary from the armies of the Pomarj and have since been put to work, searching the catacombs for an item, the nature of which their monstrous captors have declined to divulge. Any items of value these people had when they were captured have been placed in area **34**.

Human prisoners (32): INT average (8–10); AL varies; AC 10; 0-level humans; hp 1d4 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 5; XP 200 (for rescue only); unarmed.

30. Guard Room.

Debris litters the floor of this chamber, which appears to be man made. Suddenly, several ogres stumble out of the shadows of the room and move to attack!

There are five monster zombies in this room who, like those in room **28**, above, allow none to pass through the room without a rakshasa escort.

There are three shovels and a broken pick heaped in the northeast corner of the room. In the southeast corner lies a rotted corpse wearing the tattered remains of rust-red robes, a small steel medallion around its neck bearing the symbol of a skull and a scythe. This is what remains of the Priest who enchanted these zombies. Harthuul snapped the Priest's neck after his work was completed.

Monster zombies (5): INT non (0); AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 30, 29, 26, 24, 22; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4–16; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* death magic, poison, and cold-based spells; SZ L (9' tall); ML 20; XP 650; *MM*/373.

A captured thief beholds the true faces of the evil plaguing Newtemple.

31. Excavation.

> A 10'-long corridor angles down, and the sound of metal striking stone emanates from an illuminated chamber up ahead.
>
> The room is lit by two torches mounted in sconces in the north and south walls. Four strong men and women are working on the far wall with picks and shovels, while four more lay huddled under blankets near the entrance.

The workers in this chamber are among the strongest of the prisoners. Put to work by the rakshasas, they are searching for some artifact that the rakshasas need, according to Harthuul, to "make the world kneel at the feet of the great god Ravanna." The rakshasas, frustrated with not finding the great artifact in the original tunnels beneath the temple, have set their slaves to digging in a whole new direction.

These workers can fight alongside the heroes, if necessary. They can also gather the prisoners in area **29** and help lead them out of the catacombs if the PCs are willing to distract the rakshasas and the monster zombies.

Human prisoners (8): INT average (8–10); AL varies; AC 10; 0-level humans; hp 1d4+2 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 7; XP 200 (for rescue only); shovel or pickaxe (Dmg 1d6).

32. Old Excavation.

> Stone debris covers the floor of this otherwise empty room.

This room was one of the original chambers used by the Priests of Trithereon for storing their more valuable treasures. PCs searching the room find nothing of interest.

33. Dusty Corridor. The steps at the western end of this corridor ascend 60 feet to the library (area **13**). The secret door at the top can be opened from below by simply pushing on a protruding stone set into the nearby wall. Dwarven PCs have a 5-in-6 chance of spotting the protruding stone; other PCs have a 2-in-6 chance. Thieves making a successful Find Traps roll at +15% also locate the stone.

The secret door leading to area **34** is used frequently by the rakshasas, as indicated by the disturbances in the dust on the floor. Thus, PCs stand a good chance of detecting the secret door (4-in-6 chance for dwarves, 3-in-6 for elves, and 2-in-6 for everyone else). However, the door is held shut by Killian's *wizard lock* spell, cast at 7th-level.

34. Treasure Room.

> This room is dusty and strung with cobwebs. To your right is a large stone chest, while in front of you rests a table littered with various items and a mahogany coffer.

The table is covered with various pieces of cheap jewelry and trinkets—the personal possessions of the prisoners in areas **29** and **31** (100 gp total value). Also resting on the table is an item recovered from area **32**: a magical footman's mace once used by the Priests of Trithereon. When Harthuul picked up the mace, a blast of energy coursed through the handle, burning him badly. Seeing no use for the weapon, the rakshasas elected to hide it here.

This *footman's mace +3* is Chaotic Good, has an ego of 11, and speaks Old Oeridian. It was made to slay Lawful Evil creatures and can cause *confusion* in such creatures for 2–12 rounds if it hits them. The mace can also *detect evil* in a 10' radius and *locate object* in a 120' radius. Evil creatures who handle the mace are struck by a blast of Positive Energy for 2–12 points of damage; the energy released in this attack is neither magical nor fire-based and can harm creatures resistant to magic and fire.

The mace's name is *Yldrendar*, meaning "Holy Freedom" in Old Oeridian. The rune of the god Trithereon is stamped on the mace's head, which is shaped like the head of a brass dragon.

The mahogany coffer is locked and trapped with a needle coated with Type D poison. Alladus carries the key that, when inserted into the lock, properly disarms the needle trap. Within the coffer are a dozen gems: an opal (1,000 gp), a topaz (500 gp), a garnet (500 gp), two pearls (100 gp each), a sardonyx (75 gp), three pieces of zircon (50 gp each), two turquoise shards (10 gp each), and a chip of obsidian (5 gp). The coffer itself is worth 100 gp (50 gp without the key).

The large stone chest against the wall is also locked, but the exterior is not trapped. It holds 3,698 gp in coins of various mintage. Most of the coins are marked with symbols of Fax, Elredd, and the Pomarj. The rest is older currency from the days when the Priests of Trithereon controlled the temple.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs believe the rakshasas' lies about the Hand of Pelor and leave the area, the adventure is effectively over. The PCs have failed to uncover the true threat to Newtemple. It doesn't take long for the Temple of Pelor in the City of Greyhawk to realize that the "Hand of Pelor" is a fraud and send another group to investigate what's going on in Newtemple. Whether the PCs are chosen to investigate is up to the DM.

If the PCs discover the truth about the "priests," the rakshasas try to dispatch them. If they are successful in eliminating all of the PCs, the rakshasas send three of their *charmed* acolytes with a message to the Priests in Greyhawk City, intended to allay their suspicions by revealing how the "Hand of Pelor" has protected the Newtemple parish from ravaging humanoids. If the PCs come close to killing all the Rakshasas, the last one standing screams for parley and tells the PCs the truth about the bogus "Hand of Pelor" to save itself:

> "Fools! If you kill me, you doom all of Newtemple! The Hand of Pelor is a *fake*—a ruse to trick you into leaving us alone! *We* are the real power that keeps the other beasts from invading. We protect these humans from the greater evil that surrounds them. Without us, Newtemple would be nothing but burned forests and ransacked homes. What will these people do once we're gone? Will you stay to protect them? Do you even have the power?"

The rakshasa agrees to give the PCs safe passage from Newtemple if they simply leave the rakshasa(s) alone. If the adventure comes down to this, the players must either comply or think of some way of protecting the land once the rakshasas are gone. Good PCs have a tough decision to make: leave Newtemple open to attack by humanoids, or stay and defend the area themselves.

A third option requires that the PCs evacuate the locals. The caravel can carry 30 passengers rather uncomfortably, and up to 60 can be crammed into the ship if it is filled bow to stern. There are 35 families still living in the area, some of whom are too hard-headed to leave, even when faced with the threat of certain destruction. This could create some tough roleplaying situations for Good-aligned PCs and is beyond the scope of this adventure.

If the PCs find the scroll with the clue to the Rakshasan artifact (see area **13**) and translate it, they might realize that the vague prophecy actually points to the Burning Cliffs (north of what was once the Rover Lands). This requires a successful Local History or Ancient History proficiency check at –6. If the PCs can convince the rakshasas or trick them into thinking that the artifact does not lie in Newtemple, the rakshasas might leave without a fight.

If the PCs solve the secret of Newtemple and expose the rakshasa threat, they should receive a story award of 10,000 XP, to be divided up evenly among them. They should also receive 200 XP for each prisoner of the rakshasas rescued from the temple's catacombs.

Once the rakshasas are slain or driven from the Temple of Pelor, the shadowy pall enshrouding the temple lifts, and Pelor once again allows the radiant light of the sun to shine upon the temple walls.

The PCs might choose to stay in the Newtemple area once freeing it of the rakshasas' tyranny. Humanoids from the Pomarj continue to make forays into the area, testing the strength of its new lords. The temple itself is defensible; PCs might also seek to repair and garrison the Northern Watch. The magical mace *Yldrendar*, if recovered, agrees to help the PCs if they decide to stay and defend Newtemple, under the conditions that the priesthood of Pelor agrees to surrender the temple, allowing it to be converted back into a temple dedicated to Trithereon.

If the rakshasas are driven out of Newtemple, they are likely to trouble the PCs again in the future, either by returning to the area in another guise or finding some way to follow the PCs and eliminate them. Ω

Coming in Issue #74

Cover by Tony Szczudlo

"Preemptive Strike"
by Paul Culotta.
An AD&D® adventure
for levels 10–15.

"Night of the Bloodbirds"
by Brian Corvello.
An AD&D adventure
for levels 3–7.

"First People"
by Kent Ertman.
An AD&D adventure
for levels 4–6.

"The Scourge of Scalabar"
by Christopher Perkins.
An AD&D adventure
for levels 1–3.

FAERIE WOOD

BY JEFF CROOK

The art of deception

Artwork by Steve Bryant

Jeff Crook is the author of TSR's latest DRAGONLANCE® *novel,* The Rose and the Skull, *released this month. This is also his fifth appearance in* DUNGEON® Adventures.

"Faerie Wood" is an AD&D adventure for 5–7 characters of levels 1–2 (about 10 total levels). The adventuring party should include at least one elf, gnome, Ranger, or Druid. The module can be set in any temperate forest. It begins as the PCs are traveling through the woods.

Art For Sale!

Begin the adventure by reading or paraphrasing the following text to the PCs:

> The path through the woods appears well-traveled, with the stones and forest debris cleared several feet to either side, sturdy wooden bridges crossing the wider gullies, and very few creepers or vines in the way to catch your clothes or trip your feet. A small stream bubbles and purls, winding its way parallel to your course. Occasionally, you spot the remains of an old campfire beside the road, and the damper places are pockmarked with the hooves of horses and rutted from the wheels of wagons. But as yet, you haven't met a single fellow traveler this fine summer's day—that is until you round a turn in the path and find another wooden bridge crossing a tributary to the main stream.
>
> Pulled off to the side of the path, just beside the bridge, stands a large hand-drawn cart. Lounging on the ground beside it, resting against the spokes of the cart's wheel, is a strange little creature. He appears to be a gnome of some sort, with his diminutive stature and large bulbous nose. His leather armor is filthy, and the hilt of his shortsword shows hints of rust. His dark hair and beard are scraggly and unkempt, and his skin has an unhealthy yellowish tinge, but otherwise he seems friendly and harmless enough as he sees your approach and rises to greet you.
>
> On the side of the cart there hangs a small sign on which is

painted "Bark Wilder—Original Sculptures in Wood." On the cart itself there are two wooden chests; the larger one is locked with a large iron padlock and has doors like a cabinet. The other chest is smaller, with a hinged lid, and appears similar to a carpenter's tool box.

The gnome introduces himself as Bark Wilder, a sculptor of wood. Bark invites the PCs to view his wares. If they agree, read or paraphrase the following:

The gnome produces a large brass key from his pocket and unlocks the large chest. With a flourish, he swings open the cabinet doors, revealing several shelves within. You are astonished by the quality of his work. His sculptures are of various woodland creatures: a squirrel, a chipmunk, and a remarkable little wooden hedgehog; but perhaps the most astounding examples of his work are his faeries. Their wings look as delicate and fragile as the wings of real faeries. They seem to glow with their own light when held up to the sun. Their features are incredibly lifelike; their tiny wooden faces perfectly reflect various emotions, from fear and sadness to surprise and apparent delight. Others seem to be shyly hiding behind their own gossamer wings. From the grin on his dirty face, Mr. Bark Wilder is obviously proud of his work, as he should be.

Neither Bark Wilder nor his work are as innocent as they appear. Bark is a spriggan, and his hatred of faerie folk knows no bounds. He has no artist talent whatsoever; instead, he has a magical *wand of flesh to wood* that he uses to create his unique crafts. All of his creations were once living creatures. He especially likes to work with sprites, pixies, and grigs.

Bark has no quarrel with the PCs as yet; he is simply trying to make a little money. He parts with the woodland creatures for a mere 20 gp each, but for the sprites, he asks 50 gp and does not back down from this price. The PCs might be suspicious of the unique quality of his work, but it is unlikely they have the magical means to discover the truth (*detect lie, legend lore, true seeing*). However, elves and Druids might suspect that the sculptures are a little too realistic to be mere carvings.

Bark Wilder (spriggan): INT very (12); AL CE; AC 5 (10); MV 9 or 15; HD 4 or 8+4; hp 27 (43); THAC0 17 or 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2–8/2–8 (weapon) +7 (Strength bonus; giant form only); SA spells, Thief abilities (in gnome form only); SD see below; SZ S (3' tall) or L (12' tall); ML 16; XP 3,000; *MM*/162; broadsword, *wand of flesh to wood* (13 charges).

If attacked, Bark defends himself, first by releasing the shikes from their iron box (see below), then changing into his giant form (this takes one round, during which he cannot attack), and finally attacking with his sword. If pressed, he uses his *wand of flesh to wood*. In his small form, he can also cast *affect normal fires, shatter,* and *scare* once per round instead of attacking.

Bark has been working his malicious evil against the faerie folk without fear of retribution because of his servants—a band of shikes. Shikes are a breed of evil faeries. They are very small, usually no larger than four inches tall, and covered by a silvery chitinous shell that looks almost like full plate armor. Their wings are like those of beetles, folding out from beneath hinged back shells, while their heads resemble Trojan helms with broad, razor-sharp crests. They attack by ramming their opponents, slicing through flesh and bone with their head crests. Normal sprites and faeries are deathly afraid of these little monstrosities, and shikes hate all other faerie-folk, attacking them on sight.

Shikes (20): INT average (9); AL NE; AC 0; MV 6, fly 24 (A); HD 1–1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SZ T (4" tall); ML 18; XP 65.

The shikes live in a small box inside the smaller chest on Bark's wagon. The chest also contains Bark's treasure: one sack containing 112 sp, another sack with 204 gp, a small bag holding 560 gp in semi-precious stones, and a potion of *reptile control*. Bark keeps his magical wand with him at all times.

Sleepy Time

In the following encounter, it is assumed the PCs have purchased one of Bark's faeries. If not, the sprites below peacefully approach the PCs and ask for their assistance.

You travel for a few more hours, entering an area where lovely blue flowers shaped like tiny bells decorate the banks beside the path.

The air around you buzzes with bees and shimmers with motes of dust floating in shafts of sunlight that slant through the trees. Suddenly, you hear a noise not unlike a dozen harpists all plucking the same string at once.

Suddenly, swarms of tiny darts cross the path, zip around your ears, pluck at your clothes, and pink against your armor.

Sprites (36): INT very (11); AL N; AC 6; MV 9, fly 18 (B); HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1–3); SA +2 to attack opponents while *invisible*, sleep poison; SD *invisibility*, *detect good/evil* within 50 yards; SZ S (2' tall); ML 12; XP 270; *MM*/328.

The sprites use drugged arrows (save vs. poison or fall into a deep sleep for 1d6 hours). They also wield small swords and spears. The sprites continue to attack until driven off, or until all the PCs are asleep. If driven off, the sprites return and try to bluff and intimidate the PCs, promising further attacks unless the PCs agree to help them. Once all the PCs are asleep, the sprites bind them, take their possessions, and wait for them to awake.

Once the entire party is awake, read or paraphrase the following:

You awaken to find yourself dangling upside-down several feet above the ground. Your arms are bound tightly to your sides by thick leafy vines.

Dozens and dozens of small elfin creatures surround you. They are armed with slender swords and spears and bows, and they appear incensed. Some stand on the ground, while others flit about on dragonfly wings, buzzing around your heads, and threatening you

with their tiny weapons. Set up on the ground just before you is the sculpture you purchased from Bark Wilder. Several of the faeries are gathered around it, weeping profusely and stroking it lovingly.

A figure approaches through the crowd of sprites. He is taller than the others and wears a black robe. His only weapon is a small wooden staff topped by a tiny, sparkling jewel. Little blue fingers of lightning course up and down its length each time it touches the ground. This apparent leader stops before you and slowly looks up. The crowd of sprites grows silent as the leader speaks.

"Foolish large ones," he says with a sneer. "Did you really believe that anyone could so perfectly capture the essence of a living being in a form of dead wood? He turns and indicates the sculpture. "He was my brother. No mortal artist could ever reproduce the sadness of that noble brow. Yet his life-spark was ended and his flesh turned into wood by that accursed monster, Bark Wilder." The crowd of sprites hisses at the mention of the name of their mortal enemy.

After a moment, the leader continues, "I am Alder Darkwand. These are my people. For years, my people have been hunted by Bark Wilder. How many have died?" he cries out. "How many of my people stand ignobly on greasy tavern shelves or rot in musty attics? How many have been burned for firewood on a cold winter's night, or been devoured by termites? What fate is to befall my brother now?" Tiny flickers of lightning course from the tip to the ground. "A bookend?" he growls. "A candle stand?"

The sprite waits for the one of the PCs to answer. The DM should roleplay the remainder of this encounter, realizing that the sprites are extremely hostile, but at the same time they want the party's help in dealing with Bark Wilder.

If the PCs have already confronted and defeated Bark Wilder, the sprites require proof of their deeds. If the PCs can prove that Bark Wilder is no longer a threat by handing over the spriggan's *wand of flesh to wood*, the sprites apologize for their aggression and release the PCs unharmed. Once the *wand* is in Alder Darkwand's hands, the PCs are free to leave. If the PCs seem polite and engaging, the sprites might ask them to recount the details of their victory over the spriggan, offering the PCs some token for their heroism. The sprites have 100 gp stashed in a nearby tree, and they also have a *ring of water walking* that they are willing to give in exchange for Bark Wilder's *wand*.

On the other hand, if the PCs are recalcitrant, Alder demands that they attack Bark Wilder; if the PCs are sorrowful and wish to help the sprites, they are released, with apologies forthcoming for their rough treatment. In any case, if they agree to help, the PCs are released and their weapons and other possessions are returned. The DM can roleplay discussions of the history of Bark Wilder's reign of terror, the nature of Bark's *wand*, and the dangers of the shikes. If the PCs demand some sort of payment for their help, the sprites agree to no more than 100 gp, plus any treasure taken from Bark Wilder, not including "sculptures" or the *wand of flesh to wood*.

Alder Darkwand (sprite): INT 12; AL N; AC 4; MV 9, fly 18 (B); HD 1+1; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1–3); SA +2 to attack opponents while *invisible*, sleep poison; SD *invisibility*, *detect good/evil* within 50 yards; SZ S (2' tall); ML 12; XP 270; *MM*/328.

Alder's staff is a magical *wand of magic missiles* with 35 charges.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs can find Bark Wilder again without too much trouble, as he tends to stick to the main path when he has merchandise to sell. However, finding him and dealing with him are two different matters entirely.

The objective of the adventure is to somehow remove Bark Wilder's ability to change sprites into wooden statues. The PCs can go about this in any number of ways, from a standard battle to a clever theft. It is not necessary that they kill Bark Wilder, only that they get the *wand* away from him. Once they obtain the *wand*, they must turn it over to Alder Darkwand or be hunted to the edge of the forest, with repeated attacks and theft attempts by his band of sprites. The PCs can destroy the *wand* without fear of a retributive strike, simply by breaking it (Bend Bars roll required); destroying the *wand* is an acceptable solution.

If the PCs snatch or destroy Bark Wilder's *wand of flesh to wood*, the DM should give the party a story award of 1,000 XP to be divided among the characters. Ω

New Magical Item

Wand of Flesh to Wood

This thick *wand* is usually made of oak or some other sturdy wood and is engraved with various arcane runes and wizardly motifs. The command word is usually hidden among these engravings, written in the tongue of the *wand*'s creator.

By speaking the command word and pointing the *wand*, the wielder calls forth a bright beam that strikes the target, transforming its flesh into wood. This expends one charge. The target is allowed a saving throw vs. wands to successfully dodge the beam (modified by Dexterity). Creatures that do not have flesh (such as skeletons, stone golems, and the like) are immune to the effect of the *wand*. Likewise, equipment and other items possessed by the target creature are not transformed.

The *wand*'s effect can be undone by touching the tip of the *wand* to any creature that's been transformed, restoring it to flesh without draining a charge. The *wand* cannot be used to transform lifeless wooden sculptures or statues into living beings.

Using either function of the *wand of flesh to wood* imposes a +2 initiative modifier.

There are rumored to be several of these *wands*, crafted by Druids many ages ago to deal with trespassers into their forests. The wand appearing in this adventure was stolen by Bark Wilder from a Druid's hovel. The Druid might still be searching for her missing wand.

XP Value: 5,000 **GP Value:** 25,000